

STUART GORDON ON HIS SCI-FI EPIC "ROBOT JOX"

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# HORRORFAN

ISSN 0950-0804

## BEHIND THE SCENES OF **LEVIATHAN**

Peter Weller and  
Richard Crenna battle  
deep sea mutations.

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Splatter-fest  
about a  
criminal  
who  
won't  
stay  
dead.



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## WARNING!

Watching horror films might prove to be a positive learning experience

It wasn't long after our first issue hit the stands that the mail came pouring in. We were overwhelmed by the positive response. The staff of *Horrorfan* would sincerely like to thank everyone who wrote in giving their support. It seems that the public is craving another magazine and they have embraced *Horrorfan*. Hundreds of people wrote, offering pointed opinions and suggestions in addition to their praise. For instance, many wanted to see more features on classic horror films of the fifties and sixties. I was most gratified to learn that the fans do want more than gore and agree that the time is here to transform some of the traditional horror values into contemporary horror films.

In the Screen Queen section, we run a small photo showing Lynne Gandy's *Woman*. We're got some back for that. Seems that it's OK for kids to see a head crushed open, but let's draw the line at something as unexciting as an exposed breast—go figure.

*Horrorfan* now has a new, upgraded package, featuring twice the amount of color. In the future we hope to still improve on that, but we are growing and making progress. One of the changes we made is the decision to no longer have a pull-out poster. We feel the fans are better served by taking that additional expense and making it into the editorial package.

The movie contest drew a fantastic draw response. Due to the enormous amount of letters we will not be able to answer them all. But we thank every one for entering and we had a great time reading them. The winner is listed on page 55.

On to more serious matters. I would like to bring to attention a problem that we are all facing. What effect do horror films have on children? Should they be allowed to view them? Many parents complain about their kids watching horror movies that have excessive sex and/or violence. Between rentals, cable and network television, children can spend numerous hours watching unsuitable TV material. Hence, many folks, stirred by suggestions of the explanation in *A Current Affair* among other present horror films being made and aired.

If parents feel that their kids should not watch particular programming,



they should supervise what they view and watch the programs with them, or they can answer questions. One of the advantages—or disadvantages—of living in a free society is that people have the freedom to do as the kinds of films they want. In turn, these are business men interested only in making a buck who are not concerned with ethical obligations. It isn't perfect, but it sure beats being told what to do and not to watch.

Even parents who try to supervise their children's viewing gradually can't catch everything. So what happens? I'm no professional clerk, but I'd say children are a lot more perceptive than many people think. Most likely, more harm comes from bad parenting than bad movies. Kids love horror flicks and many children are tremendously knowledgeable about these productions. I bet your average teenage-old buff can list the cast and credits of his or her favorite flicks as well as rattle off the special effects and history of that particular genre. These films can serve to stimulate them which can be a very positive learning experience. We are very interested in our reader's thoughts, so please don't hesitate to send in your opinion (address is on page 61).

Sincerely,

Bruce J. Schenkhoud

Bruce J. Schenkhoud  
Editor

# Letters To The Editor

Readers respond to the premiere issue of *Horrorman*

## More Than Gore

I truly enjoyed your first magazine, especially the movie previews to be released in the near future.

The Editor's comment is so right: It takes more than blood to make a good horror film. When I go to see one, I want to be scared, on the edge of my seat, not disgusted with kill after gory kill!

I really liked *Horrorman*, and I hope you continue to have the quality that comes from caring. Keep up the good work and you will go far.

**Rita L. Waldrop**  
Atlanta, GA

## Thanks Ma

I've just gotten the premiere issue of *Horrorman*. I must say that it's the best magazine yet on horror films! The first issue was so top-notch, that for the first time, I actually found myself reading a magazine cover to cover.

The articles on *Friday Night/Fri 2* and *Poltergeist* were very well written. Never have I seen such an attractive magazine as this one. The photos were excellent and so were the stories. The pull-out poster of *Halloween* was very striking!

I have a few suggestions for future issues. First of all, I think that you should cover a history of a movie monster in each issue. Monsters such as Dracula, the Mummy, Wolfman, and even recent monsters, Freddy Krueger, Jason, etc. I am very interested in the horror movies of the 30s and 40s and the "big" movies of the 50s.

The interviews of the first issue were great. Please keep that up because I think it's a valuable part of any horror magazine. How about an interview with master special-effects wizard, Ray Harryhausen?

I love the cover of the premiere issue. It was very colorful and something that really catches the eye! Keep up with the color pictures, it makes the magazine look fabulous!

Keep up the good work. You've got a great magazine here! A magazine that will make every horror film fan proud.

**Leanne Wagner**  
Shoreham, NY

## We Blew It

I'm very impressed with the magazine and with what you are trying to do

with it. I've read most of the issue, and hopefully not forgotten magazine, *Castle Of Frankenstein*. The *Screening Room* section reminds me of *GM's* pre-up pages and I commend you on your decision to strike a pleasing deal once between the new and the old.

The area I believe you need to improve on most is research. Your brief *Halloween* article was good, but it listed other films on video that are not *Halloween*. To list such films as *Anytime, Anyplace, Tales From The Crypt, The Street Must Wait*, and a few others as *Halloween* films shows the lack of knowledge of your "Phantoms" and the editors who should have spotted these errors.

**Bryan F. Monte**  
Columbia, SC

Please forgive our oversight. Several of those films listed were *British-made* and not *Halloween* films.

## Creature Feature

Congratulations on your first issue of *Horrorman* magazine. I am glad to see the number of magazines covering the genre expanding and I will be looking forward to future issues.

I was particularly pleased to see an article on the upcoming *Friday Night/Fri 2*, and to see photos of my creature effects featured so prominently in it. However, I would like to offer one correction to the text of your article. The special make-up effects were created by two teams, one being supervised by Greg Cannom and responsible for the "Lunar-werewolf" and "Bewitched" effects. The other group was supervised by myself and responsible for all the other make-up effects in the picture, including those featured in the article.

**Hart J. Moss**  
Van Nuys, CA



## Mr. Filmmonster Lives

Kingsize Congratulations on your first issue of *Horrorman*. I can't help speculating if, in an alternate universe where I didn't assign editorship of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* after 180 issues—if by now the 180th issue wouldn't have somewhat resembled your first. Except publisher Warren probably still wouldn't have capitulated to color and slick paper.

I'd like to correct one misstatement in Jim Wyness's interview. "Remember that old 'Light's Out' record album that Fanny Ackerman used to hawk on the back of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine?" Well, I was one of the magadged dopes who ordered that record from Capstan Company. For the record, I had nothing to do with the album that was once offered by the Cap Co—it was the sole enterprise of the publisher. If Jim was dissatisfied, no reason I should take the blame.

**Forrest J. Ackerman**  
Hollywood, CA

Thanks for the words of praise, it means a lot to us. As far as Wyness goes, we're sure he means it honestly.

## More Natchy

Great first issue!! Anyone that starts a horror magazine with a Paul Natchy interview will go far!

I'm writing to congratulate you, and also to let you know that there is a total of 18 Natchy movies now on video (not to mention videotapes). Here are the same other films:

1. *Fury of the Wolfman* (Chatter or Universal)
2. *People Who Chew The Dark* (Star Classics)
3. *Night of the Howling Beast* (Vid America)
4. *A Tale of Two Werewolves* (Vid America)
5. *The Inquisition* (Video City)
6. *Don't Be Possessed* (All Seasons Entertainment)
7. *The Crawling Ventrals*
8. *Blood Moon* (Arts & S. The Werewolf in the Vampire Woman)
9. *Crimson* (Warner)

**George Latoris**  
Seattle, WA

We appreciate the update and expect you to keep us informed as more Natchy films are released on video.

*Horrorman* welcomes reader correspondence. Please address your letters to *Horrorman*, Letters To The Editor, GCH Publishing, 882 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10106. All letters should be typed if possible, this makes reading and processing them faster and easier. Remember to accompany any queries or requests with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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*"Lasertron Transformation" is how Stuart Gordon describes his lampooned fantasy epic.*



# WATCH THE SKIES

Films from other galaxies are landing everywhere. Horrorfan keeps a close watch on radar—they will be arriving at a theater near you soon

## Deadly Spawns II: Metamorphosis

The Talon Corpore EON, a state-of-the-art scientific research complex, is given a grant by the Defense Department. They are given samples to study, supposedly from an alien creature. Talon begins to suspect that the samples are not alien, but a genetically altered substance that can be used for biological warfare. If the government can fool Talon into thinking the organism is not of this earth, they would then think they can fool the world.

The film's predecessor was released on video as *Return of the Aliens: The Deadly Spawns*. Though successful, it was a comparatively crude production that was made for pennies. The sequel, produced by Ted A. Brown and Scott Mosier, promises to be an ambitious showcase of special effects: stop-motion, animation, go-motion, claymation, minisatures and every thing else you can think of. It sounds like it will make *The Thing* look like *The Flying Nun*.



discovery of a group of five evil puppets created during World War II by master puppeteer, Andre Toulon (Hickey). A gifted group of psychics discover the art of giving life to inanimate objects, unleashing the puppets for one truly horrifying night.

Oscar nominee David Allen has been set to create the stop-motion special effects. Allen was nominated for an Academy Award for his special effects work on *Young Sherlock Holmes*, and is known for creating complex special effects techniques for such films as *Batteries Not Included* and *Empire's Robotfox* and *Code*.

*Puppetmaster* is the first in a series of six to eight feature films per year to be produced by Full Moon Entertainment.

## Shocker: No More Mr. Nice Guy

Mr. Hecate Pinner—he sounds like a harmless chap, but don't bet on it. Especially not if Pinner is conjured up by *Woe Green* (Serpent and the Rainbow). *Shocker*, which was loaned in L.A. over eight weeks, is the first of a four picture deal with *Alive Films*. "It will give us a villain that will overshadow Freddy," said Craven.

Hecate is a convicted criminal who is sentenced to die by electrocution. The big day

## Puppetmaster

William Hickey has been signed by Full Moon Productions to star in *Puppetmaster*, the first feature film from Full Moon Entertainment. Starring along with Hickey are

Paul LeMat (Moloch and Howard, *American Graffiti*), Jimmie F Skaggs (Hush Town), Irene Miracle (Midnight Express) and Robin Prosen. Charles Band is executive producing, with Hope Perella as

producer, and David Schmoeller directing from a script written by Joseph B. Condi.

Budgeted at just under two million dollars, the story is set in a small California coastal town and concerns the

## Howl of The Devil

**Howl Of The Devil** Paul Naschy's latest venture, may qualify as the Spanish star's "epic" horror movie. Naschy dons the make-up of classic film monster, but blends nostalgia with the modern penchant for explicit gore. Howard Vernon, a familiar face to genre addicts (via his appearances in *The Awful Dr. Orloff*, *The Executioner*, *Dr. Z*, *The Inevitable Dead*, et al), plays Naschy's manservant. Also co-starring is the irrepressible lovely Caroline Monnet (*Star 80*).



## EL AULLIDO DEL DIABLO

PAUL NASCHY • CAROLINE MONNET • HOWARD VERNON

English: PG-13

1979

comes and Horace is roasted until he is dead, or so we think. Horace, the sly devil, has the ability to move into an other form—pure electricity. He travels through all kinds of circuitry and telephone wires and then holes up in household appliances.

This opens up limitless possibilities for Green and his FX crew. Using new state-of-the-art technology, Shooker promises to showcase innovative special effects, highlighted by creating a very effective and novel device way to shoot a transparent man.

## Teen Witch

**Teen Witch** tells the story of Louise (Kotlyn Livy), a fifteen-year-old high school student who is outside the center of things. However, she is always dreaming about what it would be like to be the most popular girl in school and having Brad (Dan Gheesler) the boy of her dreams, realize that

## TANtalizer

**TANtalizer** is action with a mind of its own. True, it turns pale-skinned beauties into bronze goddesses, but there's a hitch: the lotion draws its powers from darkness, not sun light, to generate flawless contours. Oh yes, there's another hitch: something inside those freshly-tanned bodies is just itching to get out. The star of the movie is the most sterling of Screen Queens, Linnea Quaid. Dave DeCoteau (*Microphobias*) who helms the horror movie, describes **TANtalizer** as "One of the most exciting and original screen plays I've ever read."

DeCoteau recently wrapped *Beverly Hills Cop*, Linnea not only stars in the film, but makes her debut as co-producer. Lyle Waggoner and Karen Valby co-star.



she's the one for him.

By chance, Louise's fantasy comes true when she accidentally meets Madame Serena

(Zelda Rubinstein), a fortune teller/psychic. While Serena is reading Louise's palm, she recognizes Louise as her

old friend and fellow witch from the good ol' days in Salem. She tells Louise that she can use her (Louise's) powers to

get her heart's desires.

Louise is not quite convinced. But later, when she tries a spell, to her amazement she can work magic. Before long, thanks to a little magic, she does become the most popular girl in school.

However, Louise discovers that being "the most popular girl" does not match up to her dreams. She just can't give in to getting lured by magic. Somehow it doesn't seem right to use magic to make someone love you.



Alana Productions presents *Teen Witch*, produced by Alana Lambrone (Killer Klowns From Outer Space), directed by Dorian Walker (Making the Grade) from a screenplay by Robin Mackin and Vernon Zimmerman, with cinematographer Bob Bates and composer Larry Weir. *Teen Witch* is to be distributed by Triune World Entertainment. A comedy/fantasy, *Teen Witch* incorporates music and dance into a contemporary tale of growing up.

### Scream Dream

As the movie begins, a girl is lying on the twisted sheets of her bed—half awake or perhaps dreaming. Suddenly, a deafening sound jolts her to reality as a chainsaw blade rips through the bottom of her mattress moving steadily toward her open legs. As she tries to move, rolling hands appear from each corner of her bed and hold her firmly in place while the chainsaw blade moves closer and closer. Soon blood splashes her face as she screams. Such is the beginning of Don Farmer's (Cannibal Fucker) newest shocker.

This scene gives way to images of rock singer Michelle Shock—It turns out we've been watching the bizarre spending of her latest music video.

The action moves to the apartment of Rick, where he and his girlfriend, Jennie, are watching Michelle's video. Jennie complains that he spends too much time watching the singer, pointing out that her controversial

image is based on rumors of devil worship and human sacrifices. But Rick can't tear his eyes from the screen. When a TV announcer reminds viewers that Michelle is in concert tonight, Rick "borrows" some money from Jennie's purse and insists she accompany him to the concert.

After Michelle's concert, Rick persuades Jennie to accompany him backstage in an effort to meet the singer. Finding her dressing room door he sticks his



head inside and finds Michelle touching up her make-up. Rather than chase her over, he gets an away she invites him inside and starts coming on to him in front of his girlfriend—who angrily leaves the room. Left alone with Michelle, Rick can't believe his luck as the singer moves closer and presses her mouth down his body. Closing his eyes, he doesn't notice that Michelle's hands are transforming into claws. It's too late to escape when fangs bore into his flesh.



# 976-EVIL

Robert Englund makes his directorial debut with this minor entry to the horror genre

**L**inger—the suspense is killing you. Is this a great movie made by the greatest horror personality of all time—Freddy Krueger? Who better than he to understand horror—right?

Wrong! Englund (as Freddy) is no Kubrick and it is ridiculous for anyone to expect masterful directing based only on his performance as Freddy. Don't get me wrong—Englund does show promise working behind the camera. He was an established actor long before Krueger slashed his way to the top, and on his debut he taps into the experience and uses the camera rather ably, creating an ominous feeling of evil lurking about. He deserves credit for doing a competent job, but he certainly deserves criticism for accepting and then shooting a very weak script. One gets the feeling that Englund was only offered a horror film to capitalize on the Englund/Krueger crossover, it might have served him better to have helmed a non-horror vehicle for his debut.

976-EVIL refers to a phone line called "Slavovogue." Call up and your daily fortunes or misfortunes are revealed by no other than (you guessed it) the big, bad guy with the pointed ears and tail. Two victims, Hoss (Stephen Geoffreys), a typical nerd, and Spike (Patrick O'Bryen), a typical tough guy, let their fingers do the walking and soon they're in trouble. At one point, Spike steals money from his aunt (Linda Demme), a pretty little sporting old lady—a relatively "Waters" was born to play. In a later incident, he doesn't follow the old lady's advice to steal a pair of leather gloves and instead runs down for his defense. For reasons not explained, Hoss, who is always being beaten up by a gang of bullies, slowly begins to transform into a



monster. Using his new found demonic powers he seeks revenge on everyone who has wronged him.

The big weakness in the script is that the strongest theme is also the least developed: that is we're a nation obsessed with the telephone. From dating to fights to sex, there's a phone line for everyone. They're become so popular in the film that the Devil need not possess people anymore, he just needs to get a 976 number. Radio and television commercials alone could have provided some refreshing and satirical moments here, especially since dialing the Devil never develops into a real threat.

Another problem with *EVIL* is its sluggish pacing. Almost a full hour



passes until something of interest or couple of good murders happen. Once the script gets moving Englund shows a good touch, the vibrant colors and related camera angles help supply some much-needed life and atmosphere. The acting ranges from credible to laughable. Sandy Dennis and Stephen Geoffreys should have their numbers raised. Patrick O'Bryen and Linda Demme, as Spike's girlfriend, do a fine job and survive their time.

There are other shortcomings in the film and it doesn't take a rocket scientist to find them. But the sole point of interest here is the man behind the camera, Robert Englund, "director." Needs to escape the nightmare world of horror? Let's give him a real script (how about a detective story?), experienced actors and a normal budget. I suspect we'd be pleasantly surprised.



Linda Demme (right) as aunt of victims.

# Covens and Cults:

Secret societies lurk beneath the facade of everyday life—and cloak the most insidious horror of all

By Lawrence Martin

Worship of cults and adherence to fringe religions have existed as long as civilization itself. The early Christians were dismissed and persecuted as a cult set up in direct and perverse violation of the Roman gods. Whenever a society coalesces and accepts a religion or an order of conduct, there will always be those who must, however covertly. As the Western World has adopted a Judeo-Christian ethic and held onto it for almost 2000 years, it seems surprising when we are confronted with belief that is different from our own.

Horror movies have explored the latest anxiety, giving us scenarios in which some unspeakable terror not only threatens our children and even adults, but the entire fabric of our society as well. Most often these films deal with witchcraft and Satanism, but paganism, animism, voodoo and the Unnamable worship of the Lovecraftians mark have been shown in the cauldron for good measure. Some

**The greatest monster of all time has been given curiously little screentime.**

of the movies deal not so much with the manifestations of these evils (such as demonic possession in *The Exorcist*), but with its worship and the different ways filmmakers have tried to convince us that such perverse religious practices can and do exist.

The greatest monster of all time has been given curiously little screentime. But Satan (whether like an archfiend, the Supreme Devil and Jesus Christ) is probably more unambiguously and excruciatingly portrayed on the page than on the screen. But that hasn't stopped filmmakers from showing the archfiend who worships the Prince of Darkness, or as they have been called (often when innocent of the charge) witches. Witchcraft has often been portrayed from a historical perspective. In fact, the first movie to touch the subject, *Witchcraft Through the Ages* or *Wicca*, was a Danish silent film released in 1922. This feature and somewhat pedantic affair was more concerned with showing how the



*Countering's Binky*

Church, in torturing innocent witches, was more barbaric than anything it sought to educate.

Vincent Price appeared as a witch-hunter twice in the uncutting *Cry of the Banshee* (1970) and the impressive-but-underappreciated *The Conqueror Worm* (1988). In this film, Price's character Matthew Hopkins understands the monetary and sexual gains to be gotten by exploiting aberrant behavior as a persecuted time. What's both remarkable and obvious in this film is that there are no witches in 17th-century England—the evil comes from man, not the devil. Although there are several other films which place witchcraft in a historical context (*The Devil, Blood on Satan's Claw*; *The Witches of Salem*), none of the historical movies have the true power to frighten and amaze us. These societies are so far removed from us—their clothes and manners seem so alien, that the witch hunters seem just as odd as the witches themselves. The truly powerful films about covens and cults are the ones that convince us that such perverse and destructive rituals are going on in our own terribly rational world. One of

the many narrative methods filmmakers have used to reveal these rates in robes as innocent standing upon these dire dumps, and often becoming the victim.

The 1943 film *The Seventh Victim*, a BKO movie produced by Val Lewton, centers around an innocent (a very young Kim Hunter) hoping to find her seaside sister in Greenwich Village, before her sibling becomes the title character. There is much that is well derived about this subtle and clever



*Christopher Lee in The Wicker Man*

Satan, one of the very few films about demon worship to come out of Hollywood before the pervasive anti-Semitism. The feeling of doom and despair prevalent from the first moment (a shot of a stained-glass window with a quote by John Donne: "I range to death and death menues me and all my pleasures are as yesterday") does more than set the consistent mood of the film. It also gives us the reason for the cult's existence: Hunter's sister belongs to a group called the Palladium (a made-up name—"Saturnus" may have been too strong for 1943), a circle of wealthy socialites who have clearly lost faith in all the material world can give them. When the sister tries to leave the coven, the group, which is delightfully dedicated to non-violence, attempts to drive the poor woman to suicide.

The coven is only briefly shown: a circle of party-jaded older men and women, led by a beautiful one armed woman and their ritual are only implied. But the director, Mark Robson, gives his studio-bound Greenwich Village type of a dinner table. A

crowded figure leads a mysterious Georgian church. A young student interested in witchcraft is sent by her college professor (Christopher Lee) to Whitewood to get a taste of the real thing. It gets a taste of her instead.

The film is pretty uncompromising.



And this is the director's answer to the question: "What is a horror movie?"

## Filmmakers try to convince us that perverse religious can and do exist.

(It murders its heroine halfway through) and if it seems pretty corny on reviewing, that's because it was the first girl goes into weird town film and it's been ripped off so often. A favorite moment in the film, and one of the most effective, is when the hero's car pulls into a two-pump gas station and asks for directions. "Whitewood?" responds the "baroque-inspired" priest. "Not many people go to Whitewood these days." The reality of this moment makes the rest of the garage on completely credible. Few films depict generic Satanic ritual quite so well. The chanting, the robes, the processions, even the weather beaten faces of the practitioners are all perfectly concentrated to create one's worst nightmare. It's also many people's most fondly remembered witchcraft movie. And the film has a curious, affecting air of alienation, that's because it's set in America, but filmed with British actors and they don't get it quite right.

One film that gets it exactly right is Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby*.



There is so much that can be said, and has been said about the pacing, point of view and mounting horror of this film. But it's worth noting how Polanski gets us to take these witches seriously. The Castaways, Rosemary's new neighbors in the new Gothic apartment she shares with her actor-scribbler husband Guy, seem like your average upper-West-Side eccentrics. Marnie (Ruth Gordon in her Academy Award-winning performance) yaks constantly and seems obsessed with middle-class preoccupations like furniture. Her husband (supremely played by Hollywood heavy Sidney Blackmer), something hard to notice with Gordon's constant grand laughing in front of the poor man) is any dapper retiree you might see strolling in Central Park. But their conversation turns unwittingly agnostic at times, and the *Time* magazine in the doctor's waiting room reads "Is God Dead?" By simultaneously creating a reality for the coven and showing that society may be losing its moral center, the movie gets us to take the threat to Rosemary's child deadly seriously.

When Marnie is less concerned with the kitchen knife Rosemary manically wields than with the milk it leaves in her polished hardwood floors, Polanski accelerates the laughs as he accelerates the horror. It is the reality of these light touches that keeps us off guard. What can't be laughed off is how the film connects with the real-

Jessica Harger in *Satanstoe*.



out at a perfume factory resembles a witch's cauldron, a burnt-out port in habes the Cafe Dante, named after the famed *Amfiteo* - character, two rogues drag a corpse into a lonely DIT car. The film gives us a New York that has out-grown, and psychologized and-out-lived its reason for playing by the old Judeo-Christian rules. As this original and prescient film shows, not much has changed from 1943 to 1989.

*Satanstoe* returns to an old haunt in *Horror Abol* (1980)—New England, the home of America's infamous witch trials. This British film was originally called *City of the Dead*, a better title, but still some thing of a misnomer as the film never inhabits a tiny town called Whitewood. The titles give away the movie's serious intent. A

life horrors that have happened since. A year after the film came out, Pohlman's own wife and unborn baby were murdered by California, the Manson family. And the film's decreed apartment building, actually the Dakota (that named because it was the north of the city at the time) became the site of John Lennon's assassination at the hands of an obsessed fanatic. The work of *Rosemary's Baby*'s horror has merged eerily with our own.

The success of the film, plus the eventual release of *The Exorcist*, brought an onslaught of occult up-offs like *The Devil's Film* and *The New Evil*, in which demonic sacrifices appeared to be lurking behind every candy store. Two are worth mentioning as way-out examples of gross-out ready man urens. *Save with the Devil* (1975) is the occult film with something for everyone: motorcycles, car chases, shoot-outs, snakes and Loretta Swart. Peter Fonda, his wife and friends go camping in their middle house only to discover a masculine ritual sacrifice. Not content with suggestions that maybe some backwood countrymen do things we'd rather not know about, the filmmakers manage to emphasize the entire state of Texas in devil worship. The most unfortunate moment is when David and her friend go to a local library to check up on demonology and wind up consulting one of those cheap books on the supernatural that National Public used to pitch late at night on local TV.

Dana Argento's 1978 *Suspense* has no demons, but it's really far too strident to be taken seriously as an occult chiller. Utilizing the same theme as *Rosemary's Baby*, plus an awful lot of its structure, the film follows a young ballerina (Jessica Harper) as she uncovers a witches' coven in her German ballet school. Well, what a surprise. The school, shot from all angles and in all colors, contains a demoniac, a franchised mage, a mad doctor and a circle full of magenta. When Harper discovers an ancient witched her followers in the attic, they seem quite benign by comparison. But then

again, bullet close is this joint is more satanic than most sacrificial rites.

Nathaniel becomes very serious but, reason Jacques Tourneur's 1957 *Curse of the Demon*. Dana Andrews plays an American psychologist who goes to England to denounce the civil-and-but-streely demonologist Julian Karwell at an international convention. Had more Karwell incapable of summoning up demons to do his work

## HORROR!



CHARLES GARY STARRS  
IN A MONSTER PRODUCTION

DANA  
ANDREWS  
**CURSE  
OF THE  
DEMON**  
Featuring  
PERRY CUMMINGS — MARY McARDLE



STORY BY JAMES H. HANCOCK AND DAVID L. LASKER  
SCREENPLAY BY JAMES H. HANCOCK AND DAVID L. LASKER  
DIRECTED BY DAVID L. LASKER

for him and he does his best to make sure Andrews doesn't make it to the convention. This something film takes somewhere and the content of with far more than shock value. (The actual shots of the film—nothing demon were added by the producer.)

What's remarkable is how the rivalry between the two adversaries keep the terror going—they might as well be art dealers competing for a rare vase. Karwell appears as a clown magenta at a children's Halloween party but he's able to summon up a trumpet as well to make a point. He explains to his mother that his desire to destroy Andrews comes from material



self-preservation—the cult he leads provides them with their gorgeous estate and with considerable wealth. Such modern realities ground the film so strongly that, like Andrews by the end of the movie, one is not likely to see the dark side of the physical world quite so deeply. This is surely the most elegant of the occult films, imbued with a credibility that reminds one of how worrying nations conduct diplomacy—politely, even in the face of the apocalypse.

Credibility is also the order of the day in

**All these films turn our entire world inside out and upside down.**

*The Devil's Bride* (Terrence Fisher's 1963 film about a demon cult in the 1800s, Charles Gary plays an impeccably dressed Satanist named Marise (remarkably similar to Blackmore's name in *Rosemary's Baby*) who squares off with Christopher Lee when Lee tries to save a young friend from joining Gary's cult. These men would rather sort out their problems



Peter Fonda in *Save With the Devil*





village by installing their demon dolls and when the townspeople—innocent, sad and hopelessly deformed—saw Ward's arrival with suspicion and contempt, it's both moving and horrifying. Here it's the town that's innocent and full of potential victims and the visitor who—unknowingly—carries the power of evil and destruction. The suspense behind the village's secret is painstakingly laid out and Price gives an excellent performance in which he plays both evil sovereign and innocent grandson—often simultaneously.

Lowcraft understood there is a peculiarly American quality about cults and sects, as our nation was formed by several religious fringe groups who were cast out from Europe for war-shipping in odd, unconventional ways. Unfortunately there's never been a movie that has effectively explored hearse worship in America's heartland, although a few have tried. Wes Craven's 1981 *Deadly Blessing* implies at its beginning that something is not quite kosher among an Amish-like sect in the Midwest called the Hiramites. But for all the implication, these Hiramites are a bunch, but peaceful lot. The real threat to the three voluptuous outies who get stranded in the town turns out to be much more ordinary and obvious.

The 1994 adaptation of Stephen King's *Children of the Corn* is comically riled as the worst adaptation of his books and a pretty moving variation on the *Horror Story* theme, both of which are true. The idea of a group of children living alone in the heartland after murdering their parents and worshipping a Corn God is probably meant to summon up images of *Lord of the Flies*, but this film is badly

Continued on page 80

invariably (as in *Curse of the Demon*, the Satanist leaves his adversary his car), but if the Angel of Death must be summoned up—well, there's just no alternative. The wrenching scene when Lee, haunted by a charged cycle, defends his friends from a mind-bending series of catastrophes is excellent suspense.

Far more frightening (in print anyway) than these gentlemen's-changements is H.P. Lovecraft's vision of a dimension beyond and before Satan. He talks about Elder Gods who exist in a pseudoal, subconscious world and the madmen who try to summon their apocalyptic presence to earth would make terrific cinema—better than Price's work, perhaps—but unfortunately, there hasn't been much in *The Esoteric Mirror* (1970) Dean Stockwell (then an acting band) plays the steps of a devilish band who attempt to seduce Sandra Devereaux and with his monstrous twin brother (and the bad enough trouble with *Tray* [Dante]), thereby entering in a state of *Unpardonable Damage*. The film starts with a terrific assumed title sequence and does fairly well, considering the hurdles it had to overcome.

Most problematic is the film's transposition from 1920's New England to post-war Southern California. Lowcraft's terror comes from the juxtaposition between mad conventions and obscure nightmare. Stockwell looks like he's coming down from a bad trip and the rituals he undergoes seem like a love-in gone wrong—a problem which plagues many films from this era. All the religious paraphernalia—pendants, magic books, even the sacrificial game slab—seem very much from 1920,

rather than the beginning of time.

There's just no reality to play off of, and when Stockwell and Ed Begley, as the war-profane, duel in some ancient language over the possession of Ebert's hairy penis, they sound like two waders having an argument in a Chinese restaurant.

A much quieter and more effective attempt is Roger Corman's *The Wicker Palace* (1963), based on Lowcraft's *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, but given the title of a Poe poem. Vincent Price plays Ward, a man who has inherited a castle in New England from his grandfather, a worshipper of the Elder Gods who was burnt at the stake by local villagers. The sorcerer's spirit begins to take domination over Price's soul, forcing him to sacrifice his wife to a four-armed monster. The sorcerer has earned the



John Cassavetes and Vincent Price in *The Wicker Palace*

# Horror Show

An electrocuted criminal returns for vengeance in this Sean Cunningham produced splatter-fest

By Matt Bean McDonald

Who is Max Jenks? "He's the worst mass murderer in the world—he kills everyone and everything," said director Jim Isaac. Strong words...just how bad can he be? "The whole beginning of the movie takes place in this diner where he's just struck," said effects artist Greg Nicotero. "There's a bag in a big meat grinder, there's a head deep-frying in fat and body parts all over the place. Not to mention a gated security guard and another guy chained up with his arms chopped off—gross-out stuff." And where can you see this vile repudiation of all that's good in human nature in action? In *Marver Show*.

Produced by Sean S. Cunningham (back to back with *Stepfather 2*—which he also directed—and sharing several key crew members, from a screenplay by Leslie Boehm, *Marver Show* revolves around detective Lucas

McCarthy and serial killer Max Jenks. The two men are locked in a mortal struggle involving McCarthy's family, whom Jenks has sworn to destroy. No matter that Jenks has already been electrocuted for his crimes,



Sean S. Cunningham (Brian James) sits at the controls of his prepared to activate the power of electric shock

115 mutilated murders, or that even those closest to him think McCarthy's obsessive pursuit of Jenks has cost him his reason, their battle transcends time and logic, life and death. And there can be only one winner. Place your bets, bearing in mind that Cunningham's *Friday* (in 1988) initiated the current vogue for unstoppable killers—in fact, could Jenks even be the new Jason?

No, insists Isaac. He's not the new anyone. "It's difficult to come up with this kind of villain and not have him be another Jason or Freddy or Michael Myers. But we wanted Jenks to have a unique identity." "The thing we were all really afraid of was having him be anything like Freddy Krueger," Nicotero elaborated. "So we devised ways the effects could be used to make Jenks a very different kind of monster. Even the burn make-up is designed so it's not like Freddy burns—it's creepy and black." "Jenks is a monster who comes back from a rather dimension to torture the detective who caught him by destroying his family," concluded Isaac. "He threatens to tear this guy's world apart, and that's pretty much what he does."

Randy Lance Hunsicker, whose last-burn intensity electrifies Adam and New Dark, as McCarthy, who's abandoned almost everything in his determination to bring a murderer to justice and may lose the only thing he has left. Blake Ramsey's Bron ("My mother? Let me tell you about my mother") Jenks, whose pained screams conceal an explosive interior, as Jenks, who lives—and dies—to kill. "These guys are so great together," says Nicotero. "They're going to make this a film everybody wants to see."

Nicotero, Robert Korman and Howard Berger, who recently filmed

Lucas McCarthy (Lance Hunsicker) is haunted by the evil spirit of Jenks.



their own effects company, designed Harris' Shamu's gleeful mayhem with an eye to over-the-top sentiment. Take Jenks's execution. "Bob did the electric-chair make-up," explained Nicotero, "which took four days to shoot. The first stage hair make-up comes after they put the headpiece on him and start the scene, you just have a series of little hairs around his temples. The first prosthetic stage starts with his face looking normal, then the skin begins huddling and little veins show through. The second stage of make-up has more hairs, and Bob scored the huddlers so that when they started swelling the skin would split—that took us to the third stage, where we had a full dummy head and some that Howard did, with the skin split open even more. We were able to inject that with a lot of sparks, so you could actually see sparks in his body. There were smoke tubes in his clothing the whole time, so you also saw little curls of



smoke. The fourth and final stage was a slight prosthetic make-up so Brian can get up out of the chair and move towards Lucas."

With his dying breath, Jenks—who has been secretly experimenting with a home electric chair, devising a method by which he can project his spirit into another dimension as his body dies—threatens to make McCrory's life a living hell. That he makes good on his promise is clear from the following sequence: "There's a scene where the daughter, Bonnie (DeDee Pfeiffer), is in bed crying. Luc comes in, she pulls her nightgown up and she has this huge, pulsating pregnant stomach, then Jenks's face appears stretching through from under the skin," says Nicotero. "And it goes one step further—Jenks starts talking to Lucas, saying really obscene, offensive things to him about his daughter."

"We were actually able to get all three of them into the same shot. DeDee and Brian were both dropped through a take bed, we positioned her off to the left and him to the right. He had his face stuck up into the belly appliance and Lucas is leaning over them both. The shot is really disgusting, because you can see they're all there in the same space."

"In that same scene, Lucas falls back against the wall and pulls his chest open—there's a decent sequence earlier when we see Jenks bury a meat cleaver in Lucas' chest, so we knew as something he's really about—and is trying to keep his heart and everything else inside. It has a *Videodrome* feel. We did a full torso appliance and



Movie II (Harris) screams in horror as Jenks rips her head from her body



Movie II (Harris) screams in horror as Jenks rips her head from her body



One of the victims of brutal machinery this Jackie

put Lance through the wall on a storyboard—only the head, arms and shoulders were really Lance.”

*Horror Show* also features the nasty, not even rated dinner guest scene since the debut of *Alien's* chestburster. As the McCurtchys gather for a moment of family harmony, “Lance looks down at the turkey and sees it’s not the same turkey anymore—it’s a word, stretching, mutated turkey, a *In The Thing*.” Pictures exploded. “In the first shot, all these tentacles shoot out and grab hold of the table. In the next shot, the turkey leg lifts up and it’s got these human fingers and two turkey claws, as though it’s metamorphosing into something. Then this big turkey head

there’s been lying on the table all covered with stone, lifts up and looks at Lance, and there’s a little mechanical junkie face growing out of the side that starts to talk to him. At that point Lance picks up a knife and starts to wish it. It’s a whole creature transformation, and it’s pretty weird and gross.”

*Horror Show* was a baptism of fire for first-time director Isaac, who replaced the original director two weeks into production. “Firing the director is the last thing on the world you want to do,” Cunningham said, “because it undermimes everything. But if you know it’s not working, you have to come to grips with the consequences of not firing the director. You’ve got to make a change,

or walk away from the whole thing.”

“When *Horror Show* started to fall apart I had a real problem. I couldn’t direct it myself, and even if I had been able to, it wasn’t what I wanted to do. On the face of it, Jim wasn’t in line to direct, but he was in the right place at the right time. Jim was Visual Effects Supervisor on *Deepstar Six*, and there was nothing I could throw at him that he couldn’t handle. I know he wanted to direct, he knew all the effects, he knew me and I trusted him to take this thing out and make it work.”

“Jim brought me into his office and said, ‘Jim, I have to talk to you,’ and just stared at me, while I was trying to figure out what I’d done wrong. I thought he was going to say something like, ‘Well, you know Jim, there just isn’t enough work to go around right now and I think I’m going to have to lay you off.’ Instead, he said, ‘I just had to let the director of *Horror Show* go, I’d like you to take over the picture, and you’ll have to start on Monday.’ Instantly there was an idea that we’d direct together, but the more we talked about it the more it was obvious that one person really needed to take hold of *Deepstar Six* and one person needed to grab onto *Horror Show*.”

Isaac’s background in theater—both as an actor and as a director—proved useful in keeping *Horror Show* on track. “I know from the beginning I was going to have to keep the show on schedule. There wasn’t any extra money available, so it was going to end on a certain day and we were going to edit with what was done by then.”

“But what matters is that what you see on the screen works—not that you got 20 set ups done, that looks great on the report, but it isn’t the point. You have to get the scenes to play, and that means you have to work with the actors. I’m amazed at how many movie directors don’t seem to like working with actors, or come from technical backgrounds and just don’t know what to do with them. In theater it’s all between the director and the actors, and I’m totally comfortable with that. In fact, I love it.”

“There were some tense times the first day—I’m sure all the actors thought, ‘Who is this stupid, wussy little effects guy, what is he doing taking over?’ It was difficult for them—they’d spent six weeks building their characters and developing scenes with someone else, and it took time for them to feel comfortable with me.”

*Horror Show* promises to be something offbeat, a horror movie that combines a talented cast with creative effects work and introduces a new wrinkle into the preternatural/psychic scenario. □



# Gunnar Hansen

Forever etched in horror fans' minds as "Leatherface," he's traded in his chainsaw for a pen and found the goings equally perilous

By Gunnar Hansen

I had quit the film business many years ago. I'd seen Steve Chasen (see *Massacre*) make millions of dollars, and I'd seen that those of us who had made the movie weren't going to get much of it. I'd gone to Michigan to make a horror and hadn't gotten paid for it. And then I'd met with two producers interested in having me work for them. When I eventually saw how cheap they were—they both saw it as an opportunity to exploit someone—I'd had enough.

So in the fall of 1975 when Rob Harris (the art director for *TUM*) asked me to come out to Los Angeles to work on a movie with him, I turned him down. No, I said, I wanted to continue writing. This was what I was later cited in.

I've never been sorry for that decision. Writing really was what I wanted to do and what I knew. It's what I've pursued full-time in the intervening 14 years (since *TUM*), writing for magazines and doing an occasional book or documentary script.

But I have to admit that I've always had a bit of an itch to get back into films. Not as an actor, but as a writer. I want to write films, real films—screenplays.

So when Fred Ripp called me to see if I'd come out to L.A. to be in a new movie of his, I said yes. It was going to be a comedy, a spoof of some of the old horror movies. I would play a dark stranger of uncertain Middle Eastern heritage who ran a little temple in downtown L.A. for a few chaos-worshipping fanatics. It would be called *Whollywood Christmas Breakers*. "What the hell," I thought, "at least that will be fun."

So I flew to Los Angeles, arriving late on a Friday night. The fellow who picked me up had been hired to do it, he said, because the other people on the crew were afraid of me. It turned out having been *Leatherface* gave me a certain reputation.

As Fred's house I got my first look at the script, which I read before going to sleep. I signed the contract on the set early in the morning. By midnight Monday I was shot out—Fred has become famous for quick movie making—and I was on a plane back to New England. The trip had been fun. Aside from the excitement of being on a set again, I had discovered that old



*Leatherface* had actually acquired some fame over the years, something I'd not known, being the quiet life I'd chosen so far away from California and the rest of the world.

That fame, I now, might give me some opportunities. In fact, it did so almost immediately. Within months I was back in L.A. and meeting people that I would collaborate with. That winter, two of us developed the story, *Blackie's a Prey*, which I scripted. It would, we were sure, knock the socks off horror fans. Three of us would produce it the following spring.

Unfortunately things went wrong almost immediately. The partnership began to fall apart, and with better news developing among us, two of us decided to back out of the project and let the third shoot the film.

I'd learned an important lesson—don't do with other people what you

can do on your own. It had been a nice tale to try to develop a script with someone else who had very different ideas about movies and writing. This partnership had created more problems than it had solved.

When the third partner bowed out of making the movie himself, saying it was more complicated than he'd expected, I decided to produce it on my own. Almost immediately I ran into potential investors. Their representatives and these were people who were very interested in putting money into this movie and then putting together a package to finance a series of films. It sounded great. It sounded too good.

It was. The night before I was to fly to L.A. to sign the investment agreement, I got a call. A certain investor, I was told, wanted to raise the value of the package by more than \$50,000—a large percentage for such a small-budget project. This money would be paid back to the investor as a fee for bringing the others in. The others would not know about it, and I was to hide the money in my budget.

I flew out to the West Coast anyway. There I told the investors and the representative that I didn't make such deals, that it was fraud. It also made for unpleasant moves and unhappy investors. They smiled and said they understood that they had not been serious about the proposal, and that they wanted to cancel anyway, but they would have to consider how much of the total budget they wanted to invest.

From that point on, the project began to collapse. After two months of phone calls, I finally realized the obvious—they weren't the least bit interested in investing.

And at that point I learned my second lesson—don't do alone what you don't know how to do. That's where other people come in. So I made an agreement with another producer to handle the producing.

So here I quit? Not at all. I've just learned to do by myself what I know what to do—writing. And to let others do what I don't know—producing. What about *Blackie's Prey*? It's there, somewhere in limbo, while the producers try to raise legitimate money. And I, in the meantime, am writing another screenplay, a thriller this time. And there are a couple of others in the back of my mind that need to come out. □

# JACK ARNOLD

An in-depth look at the director who made *It Came From Outer Space*,  
*The Creature from the Black Lagoon* and  
*The Incredible Shrinking Man*

## Theatrical Films:

- With These Hands (1950)
- Girls In The Night (1953)
- It Came From Outer Space (1953)
- GoodTimes Home Video
- The Glass Web (1953)
- The Creature From The Black Lagoon (1954) GoodTimes Home Video
- Revenge of the Creature (1955)
- The Island Earth (1955) uncredited, MCA Home Video
- The Man From Bitter Ridge (1955)
- Terentius\* (1955)
- Outside The Law (1956)
- Red Sandbar (1956)
- The Incredible Shrinking Man (1957) MCA Home Video
- The Tattered Dress (1957)
- The Land Unknown (1957)
- Man In The Shadow (1957)
- The Lady Taken a Riper (1958)
- High School Confidential (1958) Blackhawk Films & Video
- The Space Children (1958)
- Monster On The Campus (1958)
- No Name On The Bullet (1959)
- The Mouse That Roared (1959) MCA/Columbia Home Video
- Bachelor in Paradise (1961)
- A Global Affair (1964)
- The Liveliest (1964)
- Wallo Down Thru (1965)
- Black Eye (1974)
- The Bunny Caper/Games Girls Play (1974)
- Bones Nigger (1975)
- The Swiss Conspiracy (1976)

\* Denotes movies available on video cassette

Scott Curry (Gina Williams) arranging a trap for the spider in this striking image from *The Incredible Shrinking Man*



## By Eddie Kessler

**A**n ordinary man, exposed to a mysterious radioactive "mist," begins to shrink into nothingness. A skywriter used to rainbows, infected with a man-made substance meant to solve the world's food problems, craves across an eerie desert landscape towards a helpful town. In the films of Jack Arnold, some of our deepest anxieties—about technology and even the best intentioned attempts to tinker with nature—take on potent and imperishable form.

He has been called the last of a special breed of film makers. For more than thirty years, Jack Arnold perfected his craft: directing films on all

during his theatrical film career, he turned out 23 motion pictures, four TV series and numerous shows for television series, in addition to two made for TV movies. "I like all kinds of stories," said Arnold. "*The Mouse That Roared* is my favorite film, but I think as much of *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. My only preference is that I have a good script from which to work."

Jack Arnold was born October 14, 1912, in New Haven, Connecticut. He briefly attended Ohio State University, transferring to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He acted and served as stage manager and later as producer for shows on Broadway and in England between 1942-1945.

**Arnold wisely refrained from using "cheap, trick shots" that more often drew laughs than gasps.**

genres and always delighting in the telling of a story, be it science fiction, fantasy, comedy or drama. He is universally liked and respected by all who know him. His films, which include *It Came From Outer Space*, *The Creature From The Black Lagoon*, *Terentius* and *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, are archetypes of their genres—to which scores of modern day films owe a debt of gratitude.

Arnold trained and worked under Robert Flaherty, the renowned documentarist. While serving in the U.S. Air Force he produced some 20 documentary films for the Army, State Department and industry.

Arnold's first theatrical film was *With These Hands*, a production documentary with such notables as Sam Levene, Arthur Franz and Alexander Scourby. Critics praised his handling

of the subject matter, calling it everything from "beginnings and endings" to "a masterpiece in its field." The tender drama earned Arnold an Academy Award nomination and brought him to the attention of Universal International, which signed him as a contract director.

"It was wonderful," Arnold recalled recently. "Universal International was like a big college campus. Its student roster was made up of stars like Bing Crosby, Rock Hudson, George Nader, Jeff Chandler, Janet Leigh, Rex and Rhonda Henson, Gregg Palmer, Richard Long, John Agar, Richard Denning, Richard Carlson, among many others. Everybody was as a first name

basis. We had studio parties and we'd all perform at the annual studio Christmas party—we had some great parties."

For those young stars lucky enough to be signed, U-I, like 20th Fox, M-G-M and others offered training in every thing from manners and grooming to horseback riding.

The training for directors was as un-generous and diverse; they were given a wide variety of assignments—comedies, dramas, westerns, period pieces and in the case of Jack Arnold, something new—science fiction. The directors were expected to be as adept with drama as comedy and to complete a picture on time and on budget.

The production output of the studios in those days consisted essentially of two kinds of pictures: "A" and "B." Arnold was assigned to work on "B" pictures. These films had limited budgets and shorter schedules. He had to use his imagination and ingenuity to stretch the dollars allotted to him.

"We had to stretch things out of desperation, because we didn't have the time or money given to 'A' picture directors," said Arnold. "I had ten days in which to shoot a picture, whereas they had fifty. A lot of my pictures were very exciting. I guess the tension of getting them completed carried over onto the screen. When I was handed a script, the first thing that I would do is break it down into a shooting order. I'd locate where the most exciting parts of the story were. If it dragged, I'd try and tighten it.

"There's no trick in spending millions of dollars to make a picture. The trick is making something good with a modest budget, using talent, story and atmosphere to the best advantage.



Jack Arnold and Julie Adams pose for the publicity camera on the shoot of Universal's back lot take during production of *Creature from the Black Lagoon*.



"Time to make use of actual physical locations, such as the desert with its menacing giant and redwoods. *It Came From Outer Space*, *Tarantula* and *The Moonfish Menace* are examples of this."

Under his new contract, Arnold's first picture for U-I was *Night's Finest*, later changed to *Girls in the Night*, a melodrama about poverty and delinquency among New York's East Side kids. It had all the ingredients to build an audience romance, suspense and murder.

Arnold's next assignment was *It Came From Outer Space*, a classic landmark of science-fiction film.

Based on a story by Ray Bradbury, the film began production in January, 1953. It was the studio's first film shot in 3-D, which Warner Brothers had used successfully in its Vincent Price horror, *House of Wax*. *It Came From Outer Space* marked a number of "firsts." It was the first science-fiction film made in 3-D and the first to be

released in the new 1.85:1 aspect ratio, a wider screen format, but not of CinemaScope proportions. It was the beginning of U-F's highly acclaimed and successful science-fiction series of films. It was the first Ray Bradbury story made into a film and the first film to use the theme of borrowing bodies. Released in May 1953, *It Came From Outer Space* broke all existing box office records. It was U-F's biggest hit of the summer.

Working with 3-D was difficult and required exact staging, Arnold explained. "I had to be careful where I positioned my actors to assure that they or certain effects came to the proper telescopic point of convergence, which determines whether an object will project or recede from the screen. This is particularly important in good stereoscopic photography. Unfortunately, it's often handled badly." Arnold usually refrained from using "cheap, trick shots" that more often drew laughs than gasps.

### The training for directors at Universal—International was impressive and diverse.

The plot of *It Came From Outer Space* revolves around an alien ship that crashes to earth during a journey to another universe. Its crash landing is observed by meteorologist Richard Carlson and his girlfriend, Barbara Rush. The ship's occupants use their ability to duplicate some of the earth's people to assist in the ship's repair. The townspeople learn the whereabouts of the ship and set out to destroy the unwelcome visitors.

Though the picture was shot in black and white, some prints were tinted in sepia to enhance the eerie desert landscape and mood of the film.

"I hardly ever went past two takes on these B pictures, because I'd rehearse the scene with the camera. By the time I was ready to roll the film, everybody knew what to do. If they didn't, we'd rehearse till they did," he said.

The underlying message of *It Came From Outer Space* is that we all live what we do not understand or is different—be it philosophy or skin color. That fear makes us react with our emotions, instead of our intelligence—even to the point of killing.

"I was able to see through Ray Bradbury's story," Arnold said. "I tried to make a profound statement subtly, but then I tried that through many of my films."

For the world premiere of *It Came From Outer Space* he added an additional special effect—one that drew a



The "eye creature" as it appears in *It Came From Outer Space*.

startling response on the opening night audience.

"There's a landslide in the picture. Well, I rigged up foam rubber rocks around the processium arch. At a cue, when it came to that spot on the film, I pulled a switch and let the rocks come pelt into the audience. You should have heard them scream!"

While in production with *It Came From Outer Space*, producer William Alland came across a story by Maurice Zimm. Alland asked Arnold to help him develop it. Working with writers Harry Essex and Arthur Ross, they sold the story to the studio. Pre-production began on what was to be not only one of the best 3-D films ever made, but also one of U-F's most successful monster series since *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* and *The Wolf Man*. The picture was, of course, *The Creature From The Black Lagoon*.

When an unidentified web-fingered skeletal hand is discovered along the dangerous and mysterious Amazon River, an expedition is organized to recover the rest of the strange find. Upon arriving at the camp site, the crew finds the horribly mutilated

remains (Richard Carlson) sweet-talks Eliza (Barbara Rush) about the mysteries of the creature in the desert wet in Universal's Stage 13. The telescope sticks out of the screen in 3-D in *It Came From Outer Space*.

bodies of the expedition guides. The scientists are unaware that the murders were committed by the living counterpart of the fanciful discovery—a half man, half fish "Gill Man." The monster watches every move of Dr David Reed (Richard Carlson), Ray Lawrence (John Adams) and the rest of the crew as they enter the water. "Black Lagoon." The webbed creature soon makes his presence known—and is captured. He retaliates by injuring and killing several of the crew. "The Gill Man" had lived an isolated existence in the depths of the Amazon... now every man is his enemy.

During another attack, the boat grounds and sinks. Ray and caretaker go to his ladder room. The expedition finds them and, after a battle, saves Ray in the process. The creature is mortally wounded (for so we are led to believe) and sinks into the black depths of the not-so-deep lagoon.

The filmmakers were faced with a challenge—what should their monster look like? Arnold solved their problem by suggesting they place a fish head and fins on "Queen," the Motion Picture Academy of Art and Sciences' favorite. Sketch artist Milford Patrick





did the preliminary sketches in collaboration with designers Jack Keene and Paul Westmore (head of U-F's Make-Up Department). Chris Meisler Jr. did the original clay sculptures of Arnold's fish-headed, fish-tailed Creature.

Arnold found locations for his mysterious and murky black lagoon in Silver Springs, Florida, a resort area on the Everglades. While there, he met young Bruce Browning, a student at Florida State, who could hold his breath for up to five minutes. Browning took the production people on a tour of some locations, and it was here that Arnold asked the young man to do some underwater swim tests. Impressed by what he saw, he hired Browning to play the "Gill Man" in all the underwater sequences.

"A number of suits were designed for the monster," Arnold remembers. "We finally settled on foam latex. Bruce was flown to Hollywood so that we could make a plaster cast of his entire body. A plaster mold was then made of

the finished sculpture. When the clay was removed, the latex was poured into the space between Bruce's body cast and the Gill Man mold. Then the whole assembly was baked in a kiln until the latex was cured and dry.

"The complete 'Gill Man' suit appeared up the back. The head and hands or fins were secured by straps. Pieces of lead were sewn into the legs to counteract buoyancy. Bruce was outfitted with a foam flitting vest and a belt of thin lead weights."

Bruce Browning, now a successful director, described the outfit as like "swimming in an ocean." He did every shot underwater by holding his breath, when he needed air, he'd swim off camera and pick up an air hose—all this without ever surfacing!

The *Black Lagoon* was so successful the studio wanted a follow-up sequel produced immediately.

In *Revenge of the Creature*, the "Gill Man" is captured and brought ashore to Florida's Ocean Harbor Geomuseum, where he is placed on display with other forms of marine life until he escapes to return to his world.

Arnold made Clint Eastwood's day by naming him as a lab assistant in *Revenge of the Creature*. "Clint was shy and rather quiet, somewhat serious.

Little did I realize then that he'd become the big star that he has, but I liked him and am very happy for his success."

"I used him again as the jet pilot that drops the napalm on the spider in *Terminator*. We also worked together on the CBS hit series, *Knots Landing*. One day, he came to me and told me that he had been offered the lead in one of those Italian 'spaghetti' westerns. I told him to take it. He did, and the rest is, as they say, history."

*Terminator* was Jack Arnold's and U-F's attempt to duplicate Warner



Brown's highly successful 1954 giant ant film, *TARANTULA*. It also marked the fourth teaming of Arnold with producer William Alland.

"At the time, my wife and I were expecting another child," explained Arnold, "and we were broke, despite my successes. Film production was at a low ebb and the studio said they had nothing to offer me. I said, 'I'll find something for me to do.'"

"Well, where we lived, tarantulas used to cover my driveway. They won't harm you, I've poked many of them up. What few human deaths have been attributed to them were caused by infection in the wound. However, because

The mad Professor Doctor (Lee-0) Currently working on his growth serum From *Terminator*





A thrilling shot of the giant spiler awaiting across the desert, thanks to the fine traveling matte work of effects expert Clifford Stone. A frame blown up from *Tarantula*.

of their size and monstrous appearance people are afraid of them. That's where and when I got the idea for *Tarantula*—

"I began to imagine what if one of them were to be exposed to something that would make it grow out of proportion—to over a hundred feet high. Think what kind of horror that would be. I called in two writers, Robert M. Fromm and Martin Berkeley, to enhance my story."

Once again, Clifford Stone's excellent traveling matte work was put to great use as Arnold's giant tarantula crawls over the territory surrounding the Arizona town of Desert Rock.

The story centers around the experiments of Prof. Gerald Deemer (Lee G. Carroll), a biochemist who has developed a spider venereal disease to augment the world's food supply. Unbeknownst to Deemer, his two assistants have injected themselves with the deadly formula and have as a result developed monstrously—their features, hands and feet are distorted out of shape. One man dies while wandering in the desert, the other having lost his mind, wanders up the laboratory, an leashing an over sized tarantula. During the ensuing fight, Deemer is knocked unconscious and injected with the fatal serum. Continuing to grow, the spider attacks and devours people and animals, eventually threat ending an isolated town, until it is burned to death with napalm.

"We needed the biggest spiders we

could find, so we imported from Panama, 84 of the largest spiders known," said Arnold. "Some of them were as much as three feet long, needed to keep them in boxes—both in front and behind. Now I had the problem of how to direct a tarantula. One of the grips came up with the idea of using jets of air, and that worked very well. I used a tarantula to reach the same way in *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. Unfortunately, we cooked most of the spiders under the heat of the studio's high intensity lights."

Asked if he was trying to express something sensual in the bedroom scene with Mary Carley dressed in a negligee, and the giant tarantula peering through her windows and then getting involved as he crawls over the roof, Arnold answered seriously, "What could the son of a bitch do?"

Arnold and another director on the U-I lot had a bet on whose picture would be finished first. He was, even playing *Tarantula* in only ten days and under budget. This modest little film with a good story, great performances and expert special effects went on to earn millions for U-I and accolades for everyone involved.

*The Incredible Shrinking Man* is considered one of the best science-fiction films of the 50's. Curiously it's one of Jack Arnold's most famous.

Aside from the great special effects and the overused props, the underlying theme of the picture is man's place in the vast scheme of the universe. Arnold stated that the story was also saying that in God's eye, we all matter, no matter what size we are.

While making thing, Robert Scott Carey (Robert Williams) is briefly enveloped in a strange radioactive mist. Shortly thereafter, while walking to a store, he is accidentally stepped on by a tiny tarantula. At first no harm is suspected, but in upcoming weeks, he begins to shrink in size. At the California Medical Research Institute he under-



Considered to be one of the best science-fiction films ever made, *The Incredible Shrinking Man* features man's place in the universe.

gives a series of tests.

The scientists believe that when Carey came into contact with the insecticide, something interacted with and rebated the radioactivity still in his body. This changed the mild germ spray into a deadly chemical capable of reversing the growth process.

Bedstrait, Scott resigns his advertising job. He latches out at his wife (Handy Starb), putting an additional strain on their dissolving marriage. Stresses of his plight are carried in the media.

The doctors discover an antitoxin, and at first, Scott is in remission. But, in less than two weeks, he begins to slink again.

While wandering at night, Scott meets a pretty cinema maid, Clarice (Agnes Kirt). She tries to convince him that the world can be a wonderful place. As they part, she remarks, "You know Scott, you're taller than I am!"



A familiar Scott Carey (Grant Williams) risks his life for a second of silence in a suspenseful scene from *The Incredible Shrinking Man*.

Sitting on a park bench one afternoon, he tells Clarice that sometimes he thinks that it's the world that has changed and he's the normal one. But when they rise to leave, Scott realizes he's shorter than Clarice—he's obviously shrinking once again.

Refused to be crushed, Scott is forced to live in a dollhouse in his own living room.

One day, while his wife Louise is out, the couple's house cat attacks Scott and drives him to the steps leading to the cellar. While breaking off the cat, he is knocked unconscious. Louise returns to see a wrecked dollhouse and a pool of Scott's blood-stained T-shirt. She assumes that Scott has been eaten by the cat.

Trapped in the cellar, Scott is alone

in a world where ordinary objects become obstacles and deadly enemies. Using a pin, he successfully kills a monstrous spider that tries to devour him, and he is nearly drowned when a water heater springs a leak. Mentally, he is tortured by what he must know is the inevitable.

Through ingenuity, courage and will, he manages to survive his ordeals until he is small enough to escape through the screen of the cellar window. Outside, under the stars, he feels part of the universe, significant in that he is part of the majesty of God's creation and that in God's eyes, even the smallest of creatures means something. "To him I will owe!" he says.

Arnold stated that in the final segments, Grant began to look "Christ like", thus, along with the co-writes by Richard Alan Simmons—he be removed an screen credit at Richard Matheson's insistence—and Arnold's own inter-



The movie director like intercom-mortal gives Red (Grant Carey) and his gang orders to minimize the experimental results in this scene from *The Shrink Children*.

ruled, the alternative ending would be shot.

The film previewed so well that the studio no longer pressed for a change.

However, Richard Matheson, the film's screenwriter, was not pleased. The novel, and subsequent script, implied only that the adventure would continue, but in even smaller realms. He thought the ending was too abrupt. Nevertheless, the film was enormously popular, earning millions at the box office, on television and now through cassette sales.

"I felt—and still do—that Grant was one of the best actors in Hollywood. A good actor must have the ability to imagine for himself what is supposed to be happening around him—in any given scene," Arnold said.

"In the case of *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, he had nothing but a blank, empty stage to play against. The spider, cat, water droplets and others were added in later. Though I supported him as much as I could, the camera and crew were in most cases 100 feet away—you'd hardly call that intimate. I'd rehearse him with the best of a microscope so that he'd be in step with the action around him."

One of his favorite stories about the making of *The Incredible Shrinking Man* deals with a scene in which the water heater begins to leak in the cellar, ultimately flooding the basement, nearly drowning the tiny character.

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pretation, accounts for the film's end tag.

"I wanted a happy ending. Their scenario would have had the doctors discover a serum that would have reversed Carey's shrinking and reunite him with his wife.

Arnold bought the studio. It was decided that they'd preview the movie as filmed, and if the audience weren't sat-



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# The Gate II

Director Tibor Takacs' \$6.5 million sequel takes us to Hell and back



By Kris Gipe

In 1987 a young boy, his sister and a friend inadvertently discovered—and subsequently opened up—the gate to Hell in the siblings' backyard; made for around \$5 million dollars, *The Gate* went on to earn about \$15 million. After two years' worth of discussions on the project, the sequel film is about to be unleashed.

At first I was off two minds," said the director of both movies, Tibor Takacs. "I wasn't sure if I wanted to go

ahead and do this sort of thing again, but after talking with all the people involved in the first film, we said, 'Hey, let's do it again,' because we had such a good time. All the main people [behind the camera] came back to make the sequel, so it felt good." The only principal player to return this time was Terry, the bespectacled, heavy metal-and-rock boy from next door (Louis Trupp), now a troubled teen. Terry returns to the blackened shell of the original house to look for help from the other world.

"I figured, if we're going to make a sequel it has to be a new story, so we





wouldn't just rebash the old one," Takacs continued. "The other kid had his own problems. Terry is a different character, and we explore him this time. He was probably the more interesting of the two characters" in the two years since the first storyline. Grian (Stephen Dorff in the first film) has since moved away, and his house is now abandoned. Terry, who still lives next door, has spent the last two years exploring the dark secrets of alchemy and demon worship. He found a way to harness this power and believes he can use it to do good. After having some trouble at home with his father (he doesn't have a mother), Terry conjures up a demon—a personal genie, he intends—to do him some favors. "But as fate would have it," explained the director, "things don't go quite that smoothly."

### A troubled teen returns to the ruins of the house for help from the other world.

Three tough kids from school (James Villanueva, Simon Brynckle and Pamela Segall) show up and evade themselves along for the conjuration, and that's when things start going haywire. Terry captures one of the minions (one of the flying little creatures from the first film) by accident, and keeps it at home. The other three kids then steal the minion from him and get it to perform, raising the ire of the other demons in turn. It all culminates with the two bad guys, along with Terry, turning into demons, they then become known as the Unholy Trinity. It's up to Terry to turn everything around, "but he's already half turned into a demon himself, so he's got a little problem," Takacs chuckled. It takes place in the same old house, "and this place which we'll call the Other Dimension, somewhere near the Gates of Hell."

The storyline is derived from the kids the director hung around with as a schoolboy. "It's a story of how you get carried away when influenced by your friends, and it's about being lured by the darkness and taking chances. It's also concerns learning that life is not so simple and things don't always turn out the way you planned, it's kind of a group story about growing up." Terry is now 18½ years old. Takacs worked on the script with Michael Rankin (*Other night Madness*), who also came from the first film.

*Gate 2* does not feature as many special blue-screen effects as its predecessor did, but utilizes more computer projection instead. The special FX

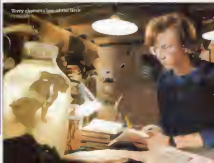


Hell is not a place you want to visit.

coordination on the new feature source again Randall Cook (*Friday Night's marionette* bats and the "terrordogs" from *Ghostbusters*). He animated puppets in front of rear projection for *Teaser*'s recent *J. Madrox*, an upcoming fantasy-thriller. There are also many forced-perspective shots this time done in the camera, in which fore-

ground sets were built in front of oversized pieces in the background, allowing for more interaction between the kids and the minions (such as in the scene in which Terry catches and cages the creature).

The sequel *Gate 2* was shot in seven weeks in Toronto for \$3.5 million. It was photographed by Brian England.



Terry captures his own little Hell.



with whom the director had worked on *L.A. Modems*. "I really like his style. It's almost black and white in color, which is the kind of style I really love. It's almost nostalgic. Spooky stuff. And that film moved around a lot more, we had a lot more location stuff." Rob Devlin, the art director from the first movie, returned this time. "Our trick perspectives were much more complicated this time. They're a little more elaborate and we took more chances with them." Also on view again are more elaborate stop-action FX, which were, perhaps, the highlight of *The Gals*.

As with the original film, *Gals II* is more interested in providing thrills than spills. "It's more *Gremlo* than *Freddy*," said the 33-year-old filmmaker. "We have some gross things in this one—it's a lot stronger—but it's not like a slasher film. It's sort of heart warming. I'd call it a 'southern' film. There's an actual story with character development—it's not just a bunch of special effects."



Jim Williams did a terrific job of depicting the teenage girl's goals of turning out as a lesbian from *Hulk*. The book *Gals* is full of more information.

Back to supervising the special make-up FX on the sequel is Craig Reardon (RFP, *Poltergeist*, *Nightmare*). With a crew of (roughly) five people at all times, the make-up took about two and a half months to create, working 10 to 12 hours a day, seven days a week, which was a bit less time (and a bit less money) than was allowed for the original. "The sequel was a little less clear-cut in terms of scripting, and they were trying to decide what would be the most effective screenplay for the money," Reardon told *Morignion*. "In looking that out, they exhausted several weeks [of preparation time]. Eventually a lot of long hours and hard work—as is usual on these things—made up for it."

The first effect assigned to his crew was to recreate a minute from the first film: "They wanted anywhere from one to six to eight of them. The final draft of the script reduced it again to one." The original demons were done with very exaggerated suits, as was the new one, only this time it's a woman in the suit, a leading ballerina from Hungary named Andrea Lada-ny. "Andrea was very cooperative and wonderful in the part, being a prima ballerina she was obviously much more skilled in movement than the guys in the first movie, some of whom were just people that volunteered. She was very good at portray-

ing emotion and character through movement." Lada-ny was suited in a literal head-to-toe costume which vastly distorted her features and included an enormous hunchback.

**The story is about "being lured by darkness and taking chances."**

Other make-up FX include a torn victim, a boy whose face gets swollen and beaten up in an accident and, of course, the three demon transformations. Two of these were done entirely with cut-aways, the third with stop-motion photography supplied by Cook's crew. One of these scenes involves a kid spouting ugly latex pits and boils before his flesh falls off to reveal reptilian skin underneath and that's not even the full fledged demon effect.

Whereas the first *Gate* ended with Hell becoming reality, this time the boys go to Hell literally. It's depicted a bit differently here, from a concept suggested by Reardon: "The idea is that Hell is a kind of black, frigid ocean, a sort of island in the middle of a black, cold sea—almost a marine environment with a fog blowing. Randy built on that to some extent, so that the final confrontation with the de-

monic forces takes place on a huge platform on this island, far above the surface of the water." The gate, as it were, is something which is looking down at the base of this chill, in the sea. "I think what we were going for was quite an epic feeling toward the end, it'll certainly be entertaining, move along well and will have some fun for people," continued Reardon. "The demons are in make-ups which cover every square inch of them, but I tried to give them character and drama, and not make them too busy [or overly elaborate], I hope the overall impression is one of focus and simplicity."

"I think because of the intensity of the acting of Jim Villeneuve [the demonized with the horns from Hell]—he did a terrific job of depicting the trauma, pain and terror of turning into one of these things—*Gate* was not just a risk walk, the make-up didn't conclude," but I think that it, like the original, is basically a kind of fable. The conflict at the end is very much in the realm of a pure good and evil struggle. I think there should be alternatives to the overblown fairy-tale (corgi back moves) as well as the type of cynical humor of the *Freddy* pictures. I think this film will be more entertaining throughout than the first one was. I think people will be pleasantly surprised. □



# Richard Lynch

After playing the villain in practically every genre, Lynch is ready for a change of image

By Bruce J. Schoenood

**T**ransparent is a word that tends to describe an actor's space. Most actors in that predicament would tell their souls to play a part that will broaden their screen image. Richard Lynch, on the other hand, accepted the consequences of type casting and took his villainous plunge with both eyes open and both guns loaded.

With his piercing blue eyes and menacing looks, he easily slipped into the guise of the antagonist. Making an auspicious film debut in *Scarface* (1973)—when he got the chance to portray Al Pacino on screen—Lynch went on to make a career of playing the bad guy, embracing the role as few others have.

He is probably the only actor who has been the villain in practically every genre—if there's a bad guy, Lynch can play him. He has fought, maimed and bludgeoned his way through numerous theatrical and television appearances spanning 22 years



Al Pacino takes a beating from Lynch's Scarface.

in show biz. The apt alumnus—the badkin, Lynch has still managed to show range and versatility: his roles include *Bad Dreams*, *The Sword and the Sorcery*, *The Seven-Ups* and *Vampire* (made for TV). He fought Chuck Norris in *Avenger* (USA, aged to 70 years old in *The Roadhouse*) and gave Sidney Poitier a run for his money in *Little White*.

We had lunch at Possible Twenty, a cheer little spot on the West Side of Manhattan. He was very impressed with

**Lynch was determined to work—even if it meant continually accepting bad-guy roles.**

the caricatures of famous music and film personalities on the walls and he asked the waitress if she knew who did the drawings. Lighting a cigarette, he began discussing his career.

Lynch wasn't comfortable saying how old he was. "That influences people, they get locked into numbers. Let's say I'm somewhere between 30 and 40—I've been in the business for 22 years. I had no idea I was headed towards a film career; I'd predominantly done stage work."

His first break came while he was on



the road with Al Pacino, who at the time was shot new find. He was offered his first movie role, which he is most proud of, opposite Pacino and Gene Hackman in *Scarface*. Lynch played Jack Ruby, an inmate who befriends Pacino in a prison farm. His big moment came in a powerful scene when he talks Pacino for some relief, inimiting a sexual proposition. It ends with Lynch viciously beating up Pacino after being rejected. "I was offered this role wedged between these two great actors. As a result of that, I was pushed into a film career."



Richard Lynch in Scarface. Photo by [unreadable] for [unreadable].



On the home front, he was married and had a baby boy. Taking responsibilities seriously, he was determined to work—even if it meant continuously accepting bad gay roles. He went on to do *The Seven-Ups* with Ray Schender, *Open Season* with Peter Fonda, and *Wildcats*. Hilden plays off Broadway and other stage work. In 1978 he was cast as a modern-day vampire living in San Francisco in Steven Seznac's made-for-TV *Vampire*. Lynch eagerly

played the 600-year-old blood sucker stalked by Jason Miller. It was designed to go to a series, but that never materialized.

The first genre role to bring him worldwide recognition was 1980's *The Sword and the Sorcerer*. Lynch plays Cromwell, the evil king who makes a deal with a powerful demon so he can conquer his enemy and expand his empire. Directed by Albert Pyun (Cyborg), and made on the heels of *Exorcist*, this delightful, medieval Indiana Jones-like tale became a box office hit. Lynch sank his teeth into this role, chewing up every bit of dialogue with delight. He is very proud that *Sword* won him the Best Actor award from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror.

His big jump to the hardcore horror genre was in producer Gale Anne Hurd's *Bad Dreams* (1988). Lynch plays Harris, a catfish, *Amos 'n' type*

### ***Sword and Sorcerer* won him the Best Actor award from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror.**

leader who in the movies led his followers to commit suicide by burning themselves up. He appears intermittently throughout the film, each appearance showing a progressive stage of burn make-up. Lynch was lured into taking the part because it revolved of equal possibilities. Directed by Andrew Fleming (in his debut, *Bad Dreams* was just a disappointing underdog close of *Five Street's*). The film was backed by the critics and public. To most's surprise, more *Bad Dreams* will not rescore.

Lynch is still and has always been, a working actor. His philosophy is to stay busy. "I've had a staying power and I am always developing as an artist." Lynch would like to change course at this point in his career. "I have, as a result of a body of work over 15 years, high visibility worldwide. It is time for me to produce my own films. I see myself as a poor man's Michael Douglas."

He has formed his own production company, Fusion Films, which was born out of frustration. Lynch is tired of playing Johnny One Nose. "I've had to stretch those bad gay characters and add a lot of color to them. But there's only so many ways you can paint the Kiki! Tower. My career lies in the anti hero vein. I'd like to fall into the Eastwood/Breman genre, only—I'd like to believe—with a lot more depth in the sense of acting and structure. It is time for me now because I've



Lynch plays the evil Cromwell in *The Sword and the Sorcerer*.

yet to do my best work. I might as well like a thoroughbred without the proper track to run on." Mr. Lynch, it's past time.

Film: *Sorcerer*, *Open Season*, *The Promission*, *God Told Me To*, *Death-sport*, *Shards*, *Grin*, *For*, *Vampire* (TV), *Soul*, *The Formula*, *Turnin'*, *Turnin'*, *Killer Kats*, *The Seven-Ups*, *Savage Dawn*, *The Sword and the Sorcerer*, *Jeannette USA*, *The Barbarians*, *Cat and Rat*, *Bad Dreams*, *Little Nikita*.



Lynch as a ghostly guru in *Bad Dreams*.

## COWENS AND CULTS

Continued from page 12

botched. Is a never made credible how this lone town stays out of the Aurore can manuremen for so long without any interruption from the real world. The nature of what they worship (and why) is confused and spurious. The film is as devoid of common sense as the couple who stumble into the town and refuse to leave it.

One attempt at this theme comes tantalizingly close, a 1981 film called *Age of Fire*, written and directed by Jerry Bruckheimer, which came out of nowhere and vanished just as quickly. In the Allegheny frontier of 1780, a damaged preacher and his common-law wife set off with a handful of followers to find a paradise in the wilderness. Unbeknownst to them, they have settled in a valley which is both worshipped and feared by the local Shawnee Indians. According to legend, this is where the "streams of man's evil blood" (assumed French settlers, as it turns out) have run together to form a witch who dwells on Devil's Den, after imprisoning their bodies in the trunk of trees.

This intense and atmospheric film evokes Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and many folk legends. Its historical context seems real, rather than distant, because it looks so credible and the notion of a damaged preacher and his sacrificial family in self imposed exile might be understood to be reminiscent of Jesus' own. The film firmly makes its case that there is great terror growing in Nature. Unfortunately, atmosphere takes precedence over narrative and key plot elements are left unexplained. Definitely worth renting; this film gets high marks for what it attempts to do.

Before people worshipped Satan—no even what we know as God for that matter—they worshipped nature. There is one film that succeeds brilliantly in showing how terrifying the worship of nature can be, Robin Hardy's 1979 *The Wicker Man*, with a screenplay by Anthony Shaffer. Edward Woodward plays a devoutly Catholic policeman investigating a child's disappearance on a lonely island off the Scottish coast. What he finds is more bizarre than any murder—the entire island of Summerisle is a pagan cult, worshipping Nature and its regenerative forces. Woodward's character is attracted because the island seems to enjoy their religious search. What makes the film so provocative is the common sense with which these villagers adhere to rituals that are centuries old. They seem indistinguishable from the country folk on the mainland; they are healthy, rudely, and jolly in any happy native seems a tourism advertisement. They drink beer at the local pub, go to the beauty parlor and the candy shop and—by the way—practice ritual sacrifice to make their crops grow.

Like *Rosemary's Baby*, the film's horror has a mean one-two punch. By making its culture seem deceptively normal (it takes a while to notice that the song the schoolchildren sing at recess is explicitly sexual), it makes our culture seem badly ridiculous. Christianity is taught on the island only as a "comparative religion." And when Christopher Lee, who plays Lord Summerisle (he goes about his pagan rituals in burlesque and topknot), is questioned about Jesus Christ, he waggishly responds, "Himself the son of a virgin, impregnated by a ghost, I believe!" This simple primal truth shocks Woodward's sensibilities, as it

undoubtedly would have appalled those of the Summer Isle played on *Alfred Hitchcock*. The villages of Summerisle stand beyond and below what we call society. They would view Jesus as useless and obsolete as they do the Christian God which completely disorients the traditionally minded viewer.

The movie has been criticized as being too intellectually removed to be truly scary. But the film, as would benefit the author of *Sleuth*, is also a who-dunnit which requires a disciplined, objective air in order to evaluate as an its final, deadly revelation. And that revelation is truly horrifying, both on its face and in its implication. As films in this genre go, *The Wicker Man* is a worthy add to the list.

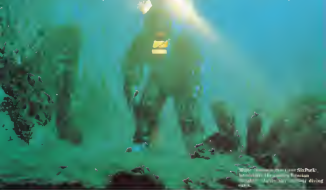
The 80s have given us two major Hollywood attempts to bring these concerns up to date and neither is successful. *The Believers* (1987) is John Schlesinger's attempt to bring Southern into Manhattan. Unfortunately, the film begins at such a high pitch—a young child worshipping his mother being electrocuted by a Mr. Culler—that it throws us off. It might have been an interesting idea to show how poorer people in New York can be manipulated by the promise of a new religion, but the film is too stiff and slick to do much but waste the screen. *The Witches of Eastwick* begins more boldly as Jack Nicholson's Devil is summoned by three crazy, New England housewives who dream of a better life. Unfortunately the housewives are not the least bit scary (how could they be—played by Cher, Susan Sarandon and Michelle Pfeiffer?). And the intriguing idea of the Devil being the answer to loved all die-class program gets lost in a welter of special effects and designer floor shows.

Still, even the looser in this genre must get some credit for all of these films are trying to turn our entire world inside out and upside down. Whether they use Satanism or paganism to do so hardly matters—the trick is in the approach. Films like *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Wicker Man* succeed because they go out of their way to do exactly the opposite of most horror films. Where other films try to be as weird as possible, these films go to great lengths to establish normalcy and common sense, then they pull the rug out from under our assumptions about the cold and cruel world we live in. A good horror film convinces you that something insane could happen. The better films in this genre go one important step further—they try to convince you that these things could happen here. □



The Wicker Man

# LEVIATHAN



Weller (Hobbes) and Crenna (Hobbes) are battling genetic mutations 16,000 feet under the sea in this stylish, high-tech adventure

**Peter Weller and Richard Crenna are battling genetic mutations 16,000 feet under the sea in this stylish, high-tech adventure**

By Dennis Fischer

The story of *Leviathan* has basically been kept hush-hush. It's set slightly in the future and involves an undersea dwelling place called Shack 7, where eight hard-working men and women are stationed earning their living as miners. Things begin to change in these cramped quarters when a team investigates a sunken vessel known as the *Leviathan* and brings back a top-secret genetic experiment.

On this project, director George Cosmatos (*Commando*, *Crossing*, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*) worked with a seasoned cast that includes Peter Weller (*Hobbes*, *Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*) and Richard Crenna (*Win*, *Unlabeled*, *Marooned* and *The Evil*, among others), Ernie Hudson (*Ghostbusters*, *Spoonheads*) and Amanda



Costs (Hobbes) showing off to the crew (Crenna) with his altered hand.

Page 10] Of course, TV's *Man-Thing* (shown) sound out an already impressive list.

*Leviathan* also boasts a well-experienced production crew. Director of Photography Alex Thompson (he's mostly worked on *Katana*, *Baywatch* and *High Spin*), while special effects people Stan Winston (Alien), Terminator, Rick Alder (Alien), *The Exorcist* (Book of the Dead) and Barry Nolan (Superman, *Demolition*) aren't exactly new to the business.

Comatos and Weller teamed previously on a little known, but highly entertaining, horror thriller called *Of Unknown Origin*, probably the best "killer cat" movie since the original *Wildcat*. A stylish and quirky little film, it cast Weller as a beleaguered Kramer vs. Kramer upper-middle class type who has his life turned upside down.



Michael Cerveris being made up prior to absorption by The Creature make up by Robert Elko.

*Leviathan* poses the problem on a much bigger and more impressive scale, but it is likely to share many of the earlier film's similarities—a confined environment, which causes a certain amount of psychological stress and characters who take recognizable, albeit quirky, steps to deal with an unusual situation.

In dealing to make the film, Comatos confided, "I was looking for a pre-

ject that was different, that didn't have so many gaps." (Comatos' two previous projects were *Rainbow* and *Colored*.) And then I learned that Larry Cordee, who had done *48 HRS.* and *Die Hard*, had the script that was done by David Webb Peoples (who had done *Blade Runner*) and Jeb Stuart (Alien *Ward*).

"What I liked about it was that it dealt with a location that hadn't ever been explored before on film, 34,000 feet under water. You had to convey the idea that you were down 34,000 feet, just as when you make a movie about space you have to convey the idea that you're in outer space, so it was an interesting environment. Second, you had people reach up to each other and to an unusual situation, so I had a lot of going to it. Third, what I liked about it was that it dealt with manny under-







**Evilness** (Michael Caruso) under attack by a mutated creature of *The Creature*.





The merged computer and animatronic.

water. That interrupted me because they could do that right now. Then you get the story of eight people trapped in that environment in a steel trap 16,000 feet underwater and that trap is about to go. The pressure outside is so enormous it could crush you to the size of a pea. Can you imagine the weight of three miles of water over you?

"The film is about how they deal with it. I tried to create an atmosphere using camerawork and have the actors create relationships that you care about. The people have been down there three or four months and they have three more days to go. They are going nuts after three or four months in that wet glass, so they're waiting every second to get the hell out of there. And then something happens."

A diverse cast of characters confronts this underwater terror. Beck (Peter Muller) is a geologist who doesn't want to be part of this underwater experiment in the first place. Doc (Richard Crenna) is very disillusioned by a past incident in his life and Jonas (Erin Hudson) is a frugal professional runner. Willie (Arsenio Dozier) is an ambitious career woman looking for a new career entry, while Cobb (Hector Alonzo) just wants to escape from the world above. Along with three others (Michael Carroon, Lisa Silberber and Daniel Stern), they're forced to face the most gruesome horror of their lives.

Cormack described the three-month shoot as an extremely difficult one. In addition to shooting from 12 to 16 hours a day, Cormack had to deal





Amanda takes a breather during filming.

with a good deal of effects work that involved wires and explosions and steel sets that did not have "wild" or movable walls in which to shoot. The film was shot in three locations: the studios of Rome's Cinecittà Studios, underwater footage in Mexico and in super huge water tanks in Malta. "Think of working in something the size of 60 swimming pools together or more," Coimano said, "with the horizon the same as the horizon of the ocean. Then you have wave machines that are anchored around, and you have to control all the effects including mock up helicopters and all that kind of stuff."

Much of the hardest work on the film was left to Stan Winston and his crew.

Stan Winston's efforts cover creating up some terrific shots.



Willie (Amanda Pays) creates for her final confrontation with The Creature.

ture crew. This crew included Alex Gullis, who handled personnel and did much of the design work, adapting the work of Steve Sharp—who designed the deep-sea diving suits—as well as working on designing the creature machines on the film. Shannon Shaw worked on design and sculpted these creatures while Richard Landon manufactured the mechanisms and red. Tim Woodroof actually played the monster, while people like Sheryl Mathew and John Brown grant had to make those creature work in the brackish water of the Malta tanks. This crew was supported

by a total of 40 other people who were hired to work on this grueling film.

The way Alex Gullis describes it, "Stan (Winston) would coordinate with the director and then he would coordinate with us. The script called for sort of a genetic mishmash. It deals with a genetic experiment gone awry, an experiment where the Romans were trying to change human beings into aquatic underwater dwellers so they could get rid of having to maintain people underwater, but it goes bad. Some of the main characters in

*Continued on page 60*





By Bill George

## From green blood to barf bags to flying skeletons, generations of horror aficionados were lured into theaters by gimmicks and giveaways

A funny thing once happened to me on the way to a parking space at the drive-in theatre: the cash-wrapped ticket stub, and a packet of "Green Blood," in my hand. I was attending the weekend engagement of *Mud Doctor of Blood Island* (1968), a Philippine production of the "heavy gore" genre and the second installment of the *Blood Island* trilogy. In the scenario, a chlorophyll concoction is it a green blood, transforms a human "gummi pit" into the film's title character. The movie was prefaced with a dismembered scene involving the audience to ingest the olive-colored paste. Some were glibble enough to follow the announcement's all-over-the-top culinary expert rolled down his window and belched, "this stuff tastes like crap!" The prolific Sam Sherman, who devised the touted "Oath of the

Green Blood" campaign, took a dose of his own again, and confessed that he "was sick for two days." Customers who bought a ticket to *Brides of Blood* (1968), Part I of the epic *Blood Island* trilogy, were furnished with a less nauseating "freebie" in the form of engagement rings.

Giveaways, customarily defined as "gimmicks," were almost a trademark of "B" horror movies during the 60s and 70s. Plastic appendages and "Cracklesack" jewelry were intended to draw adolescent audiences away from their television sets. Gimmicks creatively pitched the product, and sometimes prompted imitation. "Green Blood" was a slight variation on "Instant Blood" packets, distrib- uted during presentations of *The Flesh Eaters* (1964). Vomit bags, the catalyst for Mark of *The Devil's* 1970 financial



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success, may have influenced the art direction of the Up-Chuck Cup, developed for *I Remember Mama/The Blood-Spattered Airals* (1974). *Worthen Garden* (1967) was promoted with five packages of "Fright Seeds." For some reason, today was also an essential ingredient of *The Brotherhood of Satan* (1971) campaign, with "Witches-on Seeds" as box-office bait. "Honor rings" proved quite fashionable as tokens for *The Skull* (1969) and 1969's *Chamber of Horrors/Fred Olen Ray* recalls that the jewelry gimmick was motivated by grown-ups, females at looking *Judy's Little No-No*, "an adult comedy," got "kids that had little 'bellybutton jewelry' glued on them, complete with instructions on the reverse side.") Fangs, of course, were distributed as a staple for films with a vampire motif. *Ubers* supplied customers with plastic dentures for show-ups of *Demons Has Risen From The Grave* (1969), *Old Demons* (1970), et al. The double-billed *Demals, Prince Of Darkness and Plague Of The Zombies* (1969) featured its merchandising to gender males were given fangs and females were treated to "zombie eyes."

Publicity people were occasionally ingenious enough to design marginally different or even completely original giveaways. *Photos of Ben* (1972) were personalized with the hungry rodent's (signature), the bottom corner of each still was punctured with tooth marks. "Black Stamps," "Beastly Gag Cards" and "Spore Body Parts" detached eyeballs, severed fingers, et al. heralded the releases of *The Caves Of The Moon/My Blood/The Gordon* (1969), *The Silo/Beast/The Bloodbore* (1969) and *Night Of The Blood/Ape* (1969), respectively. Sometimes, P.R. agents appealed to the prurient nature of the public. Case in point—the gim-



rick designed for *The Horrible Dr. Hecate/The Asch/Dr. Orko* (1964). Patrons were handed a card (illustrated with an alluring woman, in bra and panties, lying on her back. A fuzzy tentacle had been applied to the presumably deceased woman's body. The card's inscription alerted customers with the "WARNING! The girl's figure has been treated with the 'KRYPTOPHILE' process. You will find it pleasurable to stroke it gently with your fingertips. However, prolonged

stroking may be dangerous. You might become obsessed with the same desires that overcame Dr. Hecate..." This eccentric example of showmanship may have been short on discretion, but made a great souvenir for kids who wanted to grow up to be serial killers.

Gimmicks were also presented as challenges, providing operators to test their courage. During the 30s, am businesses were stationed outside theaters that billed the Universal horror classics. Management viewed that

## More Gimmicks

*Honors Of The Black Museum* (1966) *HypnoVista* ("HypnoVista was a fan or twelve minute program, attached to the beginning of the U.S. prints in which a psychologist named Emil Frenschke talks about the power of hypnosis.") —*Mark Thomas McGee, Fast and Furious: The Story of American International Pictures* *Horror Hotel* (1966). "Horror Hotel" says, The keys are in the "general shape of a dagger!" *Witchcraft/The Horror Of It All* (1964) "Witch Collector" *Requiem—The Bad Moon* (1965). *Beards to male patrons* *Corruption* (1967). A ban was imposed on women without escorts! *Corrup-*

*tion* is not a woman's picture. Therefore, no woman will be admitted alone to see this superthriller." —*excerpt from audio spot record.* The same "ban" prevailed in the print campaign: *Clockwork Orange* (1971). "Iron-On Cloth Patch" (art rendering of Alca) *Children Should Play With Dead Things* (1972). *Gourmet Ghoul Menu* ("Graveyard Goodies") and *Photopak Invitations* (An accordion fold-out which had an invitation to "Orville's Coming-Out" party on the outside and the fabulous key art and an effect-flying stills from the picture on the inside") *The Golden Voyage Of Sinbad* (1973) "Mega Eye" decal *The Execution* (1973). *Circle's* adhesive stickers ("Nothing Scares Me! I've Seen The Execution") *The Last Of Sheila* (1973). *Jigsaw out-*

*lets* (jigsaw assembled, each puzzle reveals identity of suspect) *Saltus* (1979). *Fan Club Newsletter*, *Survival Kit*, and autographed picture of the female. *Saltus Three* (1980) "Iron-On Patch" (same design) *Cresaphaw* (1962). Plastic drinking cups, illustrated with metal concept of artwork and title logo. The cups were released as advance tokens for the film's proposed release. *Cresaphaw* however, subsequently switched distributors; the original artwork was abandoned and the "drinking cup" campaign was apparently aborted *Barbet Case* (1965). *Suspect's mask* *Psycho II* (1962). Shower pants. T-shirts and car stickers and decals are too numerous to mention.

customers who suffered strokes or anxiety attacks would be provided with oxygen. According to researcher Gregory Williams Mack, author of *It's Alive! The Classic Cinema Signs of Freshness*, "The idea of tranquilizing the audience with scary tactics, like nausea in the lobby, goes back at least as far as the 1927 Broadway version of *Dracula*. It's the old story of horror films and plays—the more you terrify people that horror is bad for them, the more exciting it becomes to them." "Scare tactics" were also optionally and occasionally integrated into the movies. A beating heart, amplified on the soundtrack of *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1951), forwarded tured souls of an

Managements vowed that customers who suffered anxiety attacks would be provided with oxygen.



pending "shock scenes." In *Error in A Man* (1954), a "bell system alarm" warned the audience to close their eyes before particularly terrifying sequences. Another shrill sound signal called the end of such scenes. An alarm was also used for *Cannibal Ferox* (1973), though the film's director, Ivan Reitman (*Ghostbusters*), was less than enthusiastic: "They [American International Pictures] added the gimmick about the buzzer to let people know when to close their eyes because gory scenes are coming up," Reitman told *Time Out* magazine. "I thought it was a good idea, but they handled it really badly. And the bell afterwards—to tell you you can open your eyes again—sounded like the *Avon Lady*." *Chamber Of Horrors* (1966), an unusual TV pilot, was expanded into a theatrical film. Ironically, the movie was embellished with a "Fear Flasher" and "Hazard Flare" to warn crowds about the same "violent" scenes that alerted its select television. Occasionally, a patron's endurance was measured in the theater lobby. *Werewolf* (1967) put customers on trial with—what else?—a "Werewolf/Lieut. Test." In the event that you failed the D 15 test, termed for December 15 (1963), you would be "asked to leave the theater."

Another variation on the "gag" or gimmick was solicitation of direct audience involvement. William Castle, the pioneer of film gimmicks, invited active participation

Castle, a director of B pictures, turned to horror movies after viewing *Diabolique* with a packed house of teenagers. He was impressed that kids paid for the privilege of watching with fright. Mortgaging his house, Castle produced and directed *House of Usher* (1960), a film shot in nine days on a budget of \$50,000. The entrepreneur negotiated with Lloyd of London to provide patrons with insurance policies, guaranteeing that "Any member of the audience is insured for \$5,000 against DEATH BY FRIGHT during the performance of this terrifying picture ("except people with a known heart or nervous condition.") Moviegoers gained \$5,000,000. Insurance policies have since become a convention of horror cinema, surfacing in the ad campaigns for *The Horror Of Party Beach*/The Curse Of The Living Corpses (1958), *Castle Of Evil* (1954), *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things* (1972) and on on, ad infinitum.

Castle christened his next gimmick,

created for *The House On Haunted Hill* (1959). "Escape!" Theaters were equipped with an electronic apparatus, during a pivotal scene in the movie, the projectionist pushed a button, releasing an illustrated, 12-foot skeleton from a cabinet hidden near the screen. The skeleton, suspended from a wire, glided past the audience and returned to its cabinet. Though primitive by today's technical standards, Escape drew huge crowds.

Castle's 1953 release, *The Taming of* when called his masterpiece. Bob White's adroit screenplay depicted fear made tangible—that is, surgically extracted from a mute woman's dead body (she couldn't scream to emotionally release her terror). The over-ubiquitous dubbed "The Taming" escapes from its incarceration and, literally hungry for fear, crawls into a theater of spectators near the film's conclusion. Castle was determined to create a gimmick that was "something

Continued on page 42

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# Shelf Life

A quick look at the delights—and the dregs—available in your local video store

## Deathstalker

1983 80 minutes

Vestron Video

Dir: John Watson Sts: Richard Hill, Barti Benton and Lena Clarkson

Just by looking at the box art, *Deathstalker* seems to blend comfortably among the many medieval sword & sorcery clones available. But inside, where watching actress Barti Benton already makes it worth a look, this action sets surprisingly new standards—in swordplay, sex and silliness—against which all others of this type of movie can soon be judged.

Our hero Deathstalker (Richard Hill), the epitome of medieval (Celtic) formal bookishness, travels around with sword in hand and tongue played firmly in cheek. By courageously saving helpless women from rape and death, he gets to take them for himself, proving to us and to the world that he does have scrapes, but only up to a point.

The movie is Grade-C filler and plenty of C-raps fill the running time, courtesy of Ms. Benton and Lena Clarkson (who subsequently starred in her own spin-off of scandal vehicle, *Barbarian Queen*). It's junk food, especially tasty when washed down with a sex pack.

—Steven D. Schatzberg

*Highly Recommended*



## The Blob

1988 90 minutes

RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video

Dir: Chuck Russell Sts: Kevin Dillon, Shawnee Smith and Donovan Leitch

Didn't Chuck Russell, who helmed the superior *Elm Street 3*, read this script before accepting the as-

signment? Did he have a script? This disappointing sequel clearly misses the mark.

The original (1988) *Blob* exploited our primal fears of the unknown and the intangible. The remake loses its predecessor's energy. The *Blob* is no longer an enigma, but a given warfare experiment gone awry, it's no longer a nebulous, amorphous entity with a serpentine talent to either through cracks, but literally a wet blanket that hampers anyone onto buildings like a lawn drink.

The gruesome glob smoothes up every cardboard character and shape that the screenwriters serve up.

The film's substantial budget is one of its liabilities. Launch though on convincing "Blob" FX prevail, while the original stressed a vulnerability, or fun atmosphere just ripe for the title monster's unpredictable, limited appearance. Producers took the reverse turn of an old adage, trying to invent a bigger *Blob* rather than a better *Blob*.

—Bill George

*Not Recommended*

## Dr. Hackenstein

1984 88 minutes

Forum Home Video

Dir: Richard Clark Sts: David Mink, Stacey Nalek and Denise Cox

A rotten movie that makes the *Thraex* comedies look like virtuous classes. The title character "horror" appendages from reluctant donors to assemble a composite body for his bricky wife. Filmmakers deluded themselves into thinking that body parts and profiled in one wit, combine for black humor. The only tolerable gag is a "dead n' dumb man" routine lifted from *Mander By Death*, though its repeat in line of lost. One of the film's characters aptly reflects viewer sentiments, remarking, "I can't wait until this is all over." The movie tries to be innovative, but succeeds only unintentionally in its dedication to one of its piglets, the late Anna Roney (*Three Men From The Tomb*). The "debate" serves more as blagberry.

—Bill George

*Not Recommended*

## Horror of the Zombies

1976 90 minutes

Super Video

Dir: Armando de Cossio Sts: Marie Perenchy, Jack Taylor and Carl Lumbly

The popularity of *The Temple*, which is the *Blind Dead*, prompted Armando de Cossio to write and direct no less than four films as vehicles for the immortal, and sort of Satan worshippers. At least three of the Spanish films were imported for American release, except for the initial installment of the series (*Doors of the Blind Dead*), the sequel lost.



Their affliction with the *Temple*, *Blind Dead* on the U.S. titles (*The Night of the Scorpions* and *Horror of the Zombies*). The *Blind Dead* also appeared in *La Cruz Del Diablo*, an anthology film written by Paul Naschy and directed by genre veterans John Gilling, *The Apache*, *The Gorgon*, and have even surfaced in a *Jose Pizarro* exploitation/horror thriller, *La Muestra De Los Muertos Vivos*.

Cossio conceived of the *Temple* as a band of medieval knights who were blinded and executed for practicing witchcraft. Unfortunately, the boys survived death to eternally gorge themselves on blood, and often ate virgin sacrifices. The films are frequently set in the village of Berano, the burial ground of the *Temple*. *Horror of the Zombies*, the third film in the series, depicts the *Blind Dead* in an idyllic gulf. Though the cult was condemned to permanent exile on a mystical somewhere, two fashion models have no problem locating and leaving the men. Both are apparently virgins, and suffer the penalty for their chastity less than a



## Scarecrows

1986. G. unrated.  
Param Home Video  
Dir: William Weasley. Sts: Ted  
Vernon, Michael Simms and  
Richard Yordan

**S**carecrows is a treasure-riddled sci-fi video progeny and buried on the bottom shelf. The film was released without the fanfare that customarily trumpets inferior products, the distributor's apathy is crucial.

Under cover of nightfall, a band of thieves pilfer MP's million and make their getaway on a hijacked airplane. One of the conspirators hauls out with the loot, parachuting into a cornfield not before making an aborted attempt to blow up his cronies. The plunderers converge on the cornfield, subsequently identified as the property of a Fowler family, in pursuit of the money and the double crossover. Eventually everyone but the plucky teenage daughter is snuffed out by a multitude of scarier, bloodthirsty "scare men."

Scarecrows, which takes place largely in the dead of night, evokes a visceral tableau that reminds one of the EC comic books: the two-dimensional dialogue seems to be

lifted from panel balloons ("What is this?" "Some kind of f--- joke?") and the dialogue perfunctory to the point of stalling credibility. Unlike the EC entries, the "reality" characters are more unambiguously defined than evil droids, one of the bandits sacrifices his life for the teenager, and another "bad guy" risks a grisly demise because he refuses to abandon a buddy.

The scarecrows remain an enigma. One of the characters tentatively describes the function of scarecrows as "warning off evil spirits," though one of his compatriots all too brazenly contradicts, "I think this place is possessed by demonic demons!" is the scarecrows are the evil spirit(s). The latter dialogue is countermanded via a voiceover, apparently constructed—perhaps during post production—to rationalize the supernatural vengeance. The only revelatory information about the scarecrows is a photo of the Fowler family, depicting a trio of pampered rednecks. Another character implies that the family has mysteriously manifested themselves as scarecrows through devil worship, although there's no evidence of Balaban Barnabaz until a candle is either lit or glimpsed at the climax.

The actual origin of the scarecrows remains a mystery, as is the exact purpose of their existence. Contenting their survival at the site of the robbery and delivery to the scarecrows, a third question, "Tell me why are it those MP's just kept living at night and kept sleeping?" suggesting he and his comrades are already dead and the Fowler property is hell) tells all, the characters plunged into the "abyss" directly after committing the crime, was their descent from the airplane? The theory may be corroborated by the death of the teenager's father: a character that is portrayed as innocent. Or perhaps the scarecrows govern morality as judgmental vigilantes, unraveling each thief's re-descriptive traits.

These perplexities fuel Scarecrows with more animation than the average low-budget horror movie. According to rumor, the distribution company funded the movie's completion after the original budget was drained. If this report is true, one wonders why the creative impetus of Scarecrows was underplayed by its own backers.

—Dill George

*Highly Recommended*

## The Unnameable

1986. G. unrated.  
Dir: Jean-Paul Ouellette. Sts:  
Charles King, Alexandre Darnell and  
Mark Winney Stephenson

**H**ot on the heels of successful H P Lovecraft adaptations like *Re-Animator* and *From Beyond* comes *The Unnameable*. Kicking off with an interesting twist on the haunted house/haunted child theme, the film deserves its intriguing possibilities for a standard teen-pursued-by-monster story.

The story opens with a father and son alone, only the screaming boy in a screaming, anatomically hideous creature kept behind an iron-clad door. How is this happy family to know that a few hundred years later a bunch of teens would tell spooky tales about their house and dare each other to go inside?

The youthful victims to be reside at a local college that must be very exclusive—even in the library, there are never more than seven students around at once. Two of them are frat boys planning to use the creepy house for pledge-night antics. The plot then guides them all to the haunted home where—guess what—the monster still resides.

The necessary effects—gory tentacle and the like—are adequate, although the overall darkness of the set deprives us from seeing anything too clearly. The appearance of the creature doesn't live up to the horrible scenes it makes, it seems more like a stuffed zoology gone bad.

The predictable parent and tedious demise of the students minimizes the remaining ½ of the film. A vaguely occult conclusion suitably level eerily caps off the story, which is ingeniously open-ended, threatening continuation.

—R.B. Gargiel

*Not Recommended*

decade later, vagans were the sole survivors of genre films? A search party is organized, with Professor Grober offering wartime commentary: "It's very logical. I'm certain that we're in another dimension, completely unknown to us all." Metaphorically, the crew expediently discovers the "lost" ship and—

Plot loopholes aside, *Horror of the Zombies* is demonstrative of the Blind Dead's international appeal. The film is unpretentious "ghastly stories," though the crowd-pleasing inserts of nude starlets and explicit splatter add to a facade of sophistication. Ironically, *Horror of the Zombies* is the only film in the series where the undead predators triumphantly vanquish all of the good guys. (The movie abruptly lapses into silence during the concluding minutes, when the surviving couple assume they have defeated the Zompies. One suspects Occams in paying a somewhat undirected homage to *Carroll of Souls*—or maybe some idiot lost the soundtrack.) Though rustic by today's standards of hi-tech FX and monogram flashers, the Blind Dead movies are far more refreshing than redundant *Friday the 13th* sequels.

—Dill George

*Recommended*



## CINE-GIMMICKS

Continued from page 28

hugger—more scaring”, hence, Percepto was born. According to his autobiographical book, *Step Right Up! The Genius Behind the Freaks Off America*, Castle’s inspiration was an electrical shock discharged from the lamp on his night table. Turning to his wife, Castle proclaimed, “You going to bump the asses of everyone in America by installing little motors under the seats of every theater in the country? What the Tingle appears on the screen, the projectionist will push a button. The audience will get a shock on their bums—and think the Tingle is loose in the theater!” Sure enough, the sequence in the theater sharply peaked as Vincent Price’s voice warned both filmed and real audiences that the Tingle “is

**Some tactics, like having nurses in the lobby, go as far back as 1927.**

loose in the theater. Screams, SCREAM for your very lives!” Projectionists turned on the juice, mild jolts stimulated the “touch” of the Tingle, and up! The peril of the audience audience was “exaggerated” by paying customers.

“Ghost Viewers,” promoted as the Horror-O process, were mandatory for screenings of *13 Ghosts* (1959). Card-board glasses with in-colored filters were distributed to customers free through the red telephone, and the film’s lights became visible. Movie row seats patrons had only to gaze through the film filter to visually “examine” the spirits from view. Castle claimed

that a visit to an ophthalmologist improved the idea.

My *Sardonicus* (1966) was Castle’s memorable last launch as showman. Two endings were filmed for the movie. One of the film’s finales condemned the inquisitive title character to a grisly fate, an alternate version featured his escape. “Paraphernalia” cards, with “bumps up” and “bumps down” illustrations, were distributed among the audience. Near the film’s conclusion, Castle appeared on-screen and insisted that the audience submit their verdict. Inevitably, audiences delivered a unanimous “bumps down” judgment, and *Sardonicus* met his maker via the “puffy” footage.

Skeptics claim that only a “bumps down” wrap-up was filmed, though Castle challenged his critics by insisting that “contrary to some opinions we had the other ending. But it rarely, if ever, was used.” Less disputable is the viability of the “alternate and ugly” gimmick which was renewed, usually a quarter of a century later, by *Chor-Moranchus* who did not have the freedom of voting for their preferred conclusion. Each theater was commensurate with one of three different hole-outs, however, the multiple endings were assembled for the video release.

Sure, some of Castle’s films are today. But the gimmicks turned the theater into a miniature playground, evoking a community spirit. You had to be there. Except for *Macabre* and *Moons On Mars* (1967), Castle addressed the audience in his movies, usually introducing the gimmicks on pre-credits scenes. Sadly, TV broadcasts of his films, deprived of the gimmickery, are tedious since the Castle appearance. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)

has rejoined audience participation, though the film was originally released with a mission of studio fan fare. Its public is the gimmick, including the habitual masquerades and singing in unison with the screen actors. John Waters notes in his book, *Cranky*, that “[*The Tingle*] certainly seemed more fun to me than deriving a la Bred and Janet and showing me at the screen during *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.” Amen.

Audiences also interacted with 3-D movies. Creature From The Black Lagoon, House of Wax, The Most Magnificent Thing, From Outer Space and other films released during the 50s threw everything that wasn’t nailed down into the laps of the audience. The trend eventually lost its novelty, at least until a brief revival in the 80s. 3-D sequences were inserted in a neglected film, *The Mask* (1981), photographed in “Depth Dimension” and “Electro-Magic Sound.” Audiences were provided with “Magic Mystic Masks” to accompany the film’s obsessed central character “in a journey through a weird and supernatural world.” No advice was needed when hared help, contained as “real FLESH and BLOOD” monsters,” changed into the audience for performances of Teenage Psychic Movie *Bloody Mary* in remembrance of 1967’s *The Incredible Strange Creatures Who Stopped Loving and Became Blood-Drinking Monsters*.

Space limitations prevent complete documentation of all gimmicks, but honorable mention should be reserved for the clubs and membership cards (*Witches*, *Dracula A.D. 1978*), the contests (the producers of *Blood And Tears* offered \$4,000 if you could discriminate between “Gert or Ghoul”) and the “film theater” when the audience could speculate on “whodunnit” before disclosure of the culprit’s identity (*The Great Muppet Caper*, 1981’s *The Little Innamorati*).

With a few exceptions (flash lights for *The Gate*, 1987, miniature replicas of *The Blob*, 1988), showmanship faded with the advent of the VCR. Fans, however, nostalgically recall their youthful experiences as audience respondents of movie hits or roles as audience participants.

“The gimmick made the movie more of an event,” explained producer/director David (Compco) DeCoteau. “Showmanship was what it was all about. During those competitive times, a movie had to be more than simply a movie. You had to have the barf bag, or change flying from the screen—you had to have William Castle. The gimmicks made the film more memorable, more special.” Like I said—you had to be there. □

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# Nightlife

Immoral, sexually frustrated teenage zombies go looking for some *Nightlife* in this gory, black comedy

By Nathaniel James

"These are not zombies of the Ted Lewton ilk or George Romero ilk," explained producer Charles Lippenrott of the undead denizens in the black comedy/horror thriller *Nightlife*. "These are kids who, via Frankensteinian reasons, become frustrated, immoral teen zombies. And they are pissed off!" A \$2.5 million production which sounds like a John Hughes remake of *Night of the Living Dead*, *Nightlife* will be released regionally in late spring by Spectrafilm.

*Nightlife* is the story of unpopular teen Archie Melville (Scott Green) who works part-time in his Uncle Verha's (John Astin) mortuary to make his college tuition. In addition to the necessary duties of delivering bodies and dressing corpses, Archie has to endure the constant tauntings of his two high school bullies and their equally unpleasant girlfriends. When the four tormenting teens are killed in a head-on collision with a truck carrying toxic chemicals, the corpses are brought to Archie's ghastly place of employment. Add some creative embalming, a fresh element storm and you've got...well, pissed off, immoral teenage zombie-bullies who pursue



Archie with the zeal of undead adolescence

"This is a dream/nightmare that doesn't end," explained Lippenrott. "It's almost a surrealistic high school situation."

"The themes of *Nightlife*," added director David Aronow, "are sex and death. It's the basis for all good black comedy and all good horror—sort of approach/avoidance." *Nightlife* is Aronow's first horror film, having previously directed the haunting psychological drama *Supervixens* in his native Canada and the irreverent, Monty Pythonesque comedy series *Four On The Floor* for Showtime. Aronow insists that he is not a fan of explosive blood and gore in some current horror

films, but Keith Critchlow's (Yojan-tern) dark and witty script called for some fairly ghastly sequences. "For example," revealed Aronow, "our embalming room set. Revolting! But after two days, I say, well have been in my own bathroom shaving. I loved it!"

Further nastiness occurred when the re-animated and embalmed teens decide to embalm mortician Flanders with an air hose and a grease gun, causing his body to expand and violently explode. "You never actually see it. We give the illusion. But," ad noted Aronow with a chuckle, "It's really as revolting."

John Astin, lately seen in *Then Came the Fright* and *Beverly Hills Cop*, plays the role of Flanders with charismatic, eerily gleeful glee. "I like the 'erigmatic weirdness' that develops in Flanders as *Nightlife* gets hairy," he says. "Preparation of bodies, embalming—he's proud of his work. He's a mortician with style and flair." When conversing with Astin, one can't help but recall the beloved TV character of Gomez Addams, the classic Addams Family patriarch with cool suits, a hot wife, exploding trash cans and ghastly life style. As for his *Nightlife* character a grumpy demon, Astin played it as

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INTERVIEW

# ANNE RICE

The writer of three notorious vampire novels sheds some—but not too much—light on her subject

By J.B. Hatcher

**I**n the deep, dark recesses of the mind's eye, every reader of mass-market fiction has grown to fear the things that go bump in the night. So many masters of modern-day horror have weaved stories around "monsters" that humanity fears, fears and seeks out only to destroy. We often forget that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* dealt with a creature that was both a monstrosity and a creature that sought to understand the world and his existence in relation to the world that loathed him. The novel was aptly subtitled *The Modern Prometheus*. Unfortunately, the film adaptation of Mary Shelley's work resulted in the loss of this important aspect of the literary work. Creatures of the night have become symbolic of man's inner darkness brought to life.

In 1976, a book called *Interview With The Vampire* appeared on the minds, penned by Rice. The dark, enigmatic figure of Louis, the vampire telling his tale, led the reader into a dark, mysterious world that was filled with emotion and sensation. The Undead were no longer mindless, evil creatures that stalked the night with a hunger for humanity. Anne Rice provided colorful, flamboyant characters that were simultaneously evil and intriguing. In the novel, the reader views the world from the vampire's perspective. Not since Shelley has an author painted such a haunting, cryptic tale that lets the reader feel for these dark characters of the night.

The response to *Interview With The Vampire* was so strong that in 1985 Anne

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ILLUSTRATION BY BRUCE WILDMAN

Bruce Wildman

# I, MADMAN

A fictional character who is a psychopathic murderer comes to life—and the big screen—in Trans World Entertainment's new thriller

—By Bruce J. Schoenfeld—

The journey into the weird, wondrous and macabre can be a fascinating, and sometimes frightening, trip. For Virginia (Jenny Wright), her yearning for the fantastic, for the darkly mysterious, is taken by way of the pages of a novel. Reading tales of horror and losing oneself in the printed page provokes real and fatal consequences in *I, Madman*, a stylish horror/thriller scripted by David Chaskin (*Nightmare On Elm Street Part II, The Curse*) and helmed by Tihor Takacs (*The Gate*).

Rather than deal with her problems, Virginia escapes into the printed page.

The story concerns Virginia, an aspiring actress who is torn in a delicate balance between marriage and a career. As if life isn't difficult enough, further bizarre events continue to develop. There are two men who are in love with her: her boyfriend Richard (Clayton Kopp), a police detective who would like to see her down, and Malcolm (Randy Quirk), a fictional character come to life. What



Madman meets other people's fantasies as he kills with them.



Virginia (Jenny Wright) meets her fantasy Malcolm.



the *L. Medeson* (previously called *Mordeson*) screenplay by its own brand on tales of terror. "Its power of imagination made the *Twilight Zone* sequel, supernatural feel was right up my alley," said Takase. After filming over a period of six weeks—at the cost of \$2.5 million—Takase is very satisfied with the outcome. Not prepared, or interested in making a standard slasher picture, he had the freedom to make it the kind of film he wanted. "It's a very stylish thriller with very hard lighting and a 50s feel." Takase is concerned that *L. Medeson* can be lumped in with and perceived by the public as a typical slasher film, but thinks that can be remedied by a proper ad campaign.

The credit tale met Randy Cook (The Gals, Ghostbusters, Knight Nights, who also designed the special effects, was very anxious to appear onscreen. "I'm able to work like one of the actors I have most admired since I was a kid, Lee Chaney. It's the first time I've got ten to play both sides of the camera, which is what I've wanted to do for a long time." Cook worked together with Tabor on *The Gals* and had been asking to get in front of the camera. "He was begging me about it for a long time," said Takase. "The thing that made it work so well was that he was playing such a stylized character."

Chasen came out to Los Angeles to work with Takase and was overwhelmed that Tabor brought him in for the rehearsal. "It is practically unheard of that writers are given that kind of courtesy. Coming from a Toronto theater background, Tabor had no idea that this was unusual. It was a totally collaborative effort." *L. Medeson* was an unusually satisfying and pleasurable effort in all involved, and a promise to be a similar viewing experience as well. □

Malcolm is not pursuing Virginia, he spends his spare time working fever by committing brutal murders.

Rather than deal with life's everyday dilemma, Virginia escapes and takes refuge in a world hidden in the printed word. Obsessed with reading horror and supernatural thrillers, she becomes enthralled with a book entitled *Much of Malcolm*, *More of Sun* by Malcolm Brand. With her vivid imagination, Virginia gets caught in the readings and begins perusing herself within the story, interacting with the characters. Although frightened by Brand's writing style that she is compelled to find his other book, *L. Medeson*. Sure enough, one evening a copy of *L. Medeson* mysteriously appears at her door. Delving into the book at once, Virginia again finds herself within the story. She is thirty years back in time when she meets Malcolm (Randy Cook), a charismatic doctor who was rejected by his lover because his looks didn't suit her. Depressed because of his homely appearance, Malcolm got drunk, shot his face with novocaine and sliced off his features, creating a clean slate. His psychotic obsession drives him to kill people, cutting off their features to see into his own face.

"Characters in a book often embody the persona of the author," noted Chasen. "Writers have their souls, emotions, tortures and loves and attach them to their characters. The more interesting the authors' lives are, the more interesting their characters will be. Malcolm Brand, author, is reincarnated through his character of Malcolm in *L. Medeson*. His books are very passionate and Virginia feels sorry for him. The combination of her imagination and pity with Malcolm's unrequited love for another woman (who, coincidentally, greatly resembles Virginia) engages him up."

Malcolm becomes part of Virginia's world and soon commits a series of crimes that seem to parallel crimes in *L. Medeson*. When Virginia discovers

that the book is based under non-fiction, she begins to suspect Malcolm is actually alive. Her deepest fears are confirmed when she witnesses Malcolm committing a savage murder. She tries in vain to convince Richard and the police that she can help solve these crimes. In a suspenseously critical and macabre scene, Virginia tries to give a police sketch artist a descrip-

### Malcolm Brand, author, is reincarnated through his fictional character.

tion of the person together Malcolm. She is thought to have a very acute imagination. By using her power to conjure up fictional beings, Virginia ultimately has to find a way to destroy this madman that she pulled into reality and to make matters worse, who is already dead.

With the box office success of *The Gals* as his portfolio, Takase received many offers to direct. He had been approached by Trium World Entertainment and was particularly drawn to



## ANNE RICE

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Rice published *The Vampire Lestat*. Through these two books, the reader experiences the history of the world as lived through the lives of immortal blood drinkers. She has created not just a literary masterpiece, but a modern-day mythology. With the publication of *The Queen of the Damned*, the reader is brought full circle. In doing so, the reader might realize that the vampires' dark world is too big for a trilogy, and Anne Rice promises another chapter in the continuing saga of the Vampire Chronicles.

Anne Rice has published nine novels, under several pen names: *Exit to Eden* and *Belinda* were published under the name Anne Rampling; *The Calling of Sleeping Beauty*, *Beauty's Punishment* and *Beauty's Release* under A. N. Roquelande. Under her own name she has written—aside from the Vampire Chronicles—*The Feast of All Saints* and *Cry To Heaven*.

**HR:** When did you first become possessed to write a vampire novel?

**Rice:** It was really an accident. I was sitting at my typewriter wondering what it would be like to interview a vampire. I had no idea where that

**"I saw Rutger Hauer in *Black Runner*... and there he was—there was Lestat."**

theme was going to lead. As I started to write the story and get into the vampire's point of view, everything I was struggling to do as a fiction writer suddenly happened. Everything became vivid. The colors were there, the textures, the ambience—everything. I simply went with it and suddenly five weeks later there was a first draft of a novel. It was really just an accident that I found exactly the right fantastic genre to put me in touch with reality.

**HR:** It's unlike most other vampire stories that have been done.

**Rice:** There has always been magnificent potential in this theme. You sense it, because the most shallow treatments of the vampire will have some kind of echo or resonance that you do not necessarily find with other horror material. All horror fiction has that potential. It is a tragedy that it is done superficially most of the time. Every now and then someone comes along and does something different with it—really goes for all those echoes—find out what is there—and it's always well received. Bruce Straker did it, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu did it in a wonderful

story called *Carmilla*, and of course, Mary Shelley did something different with *Frankenstein*. When a serious writer picks it up, it's a gold mine. What I did was the same thing that Straker did. I took the material selected, and what I wanted of the mythology, discarded the rest and came up with my own gang. My own language.

**HR:** When you first conceived *Interview With the Vampire*, did you conceive of its longevity or as a one-time book?

**Rice:** I very much was not finished with it. I could see another novel right away but I'm glad I did not write it at that time. It would have been too much of an extension of the first one. I can feel it going on. There was a great deal more to explore and see. I did not foresee that I would do three books, or however many there will be. At the moment I could see a fourth book. If it continues to be this incredibly intense experience for me, I will keep doing it.

**HR:** When did you draw your initial insight to develop the character of Lestat? Did you envision Lestat being portrayed by actor Rutger Hauer?

**Rice:** Lestat developed by himself.

That was the great thing about him. When I was writing *Interview*, I was focusing on Louis, the tragic hero who was a Hamlet-type character, paralyzed by everything he sees. And in the background there was this character Lestat, sort of developing in the corner of my eye. It was an amazingly subtle kind of development, and that character began to involve me more and more. I knew when I finished *Interview* that I wanted Lestat to tell his side of it. And when I went to write *Lestat*, it was the same thing, that character began to come alive, as soon as I got with him, I knew everything he is going to do. I don't have to manipulate it, he goes. Sixteen years later Rutger Hauer in *Black Runner* after I had written *Lestat*, and there he was—there was Lestat. That rarely happens to a writer, that you look up to the screen and you see someone who seems to be the embodiment of someone you created.

**HR:** As you develop the books and get to *Queen of the Damned*, most of the other older vampires become midday zombies.

**Rice:** Armand in particular has discovered the joy of watching videotapes. Well, I think they would be that way. Imagine what that would be like to be (a vampire) 7,500 years old and to be able to watch sunlight at all different degrees on the screen. It must be a fantastic experience.

**HR:** In *Queen of the Damned* you have an immense battle that rages. Why not have this in the fourth or fifth book?

**Rice:** I felt like I had to. I had ended *The Vampire Lestat* with a cliff-hanger, we knew the concert had ended and that something bad happened, but we did not know what. I had to get to what happened. In the fourth book, I will go back to the adventure which starts when he does not take on all of the Western civilization. I felt I had to finish the story I started in the second book. Basically, Lestat was out to change everything—to stir up trouble.

**HR:** You are creating modern-day mythology just by using the vampire. Do you see yourself as a modern-day myth-maker?

**Rice:** I don't know. I see myself certainly going back to myth as a source for vampires, reading a lot of Joseph Campbell and Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, and the whole process in which myths develop and what they say about us. As far as making modern-day myths, I don't know. I have an incredible need to make stories, plots and characters and if it takes on a mythical quality, that is wonderful.

**HR:** I understand that your movie options from the first two books are expiring.

**Rice:** Actually, Lorimar owns the options on all three and it won't expire until the end of next year. They recently extended their options due to

**"There has always been a magnificent potential to the theme."**

the writers' strike. They are planning to do a series of movies about these books. The first movie will be about 45 minutes of the first book and 45 minutes of the second.

**HR:** How much repeat will you have in these films?

**Rice:** They are letting me have a lot, but I have no legal control and also I don't really want to produce a movie myself. I am good friends with the producers so I can scream and cry and carry on. Ultimately, on the movie, no one has the final say. The studio, the producers, the director, even the star will come in and demand changes on the script. It is much better for me to stay like me to stay right at home in New Orleans and write a fourth book or *The Witching Hour*, the book I want to do about witches. I don't do anything I don't want to do in a book.

**HR:** What progress have you made on *The Witching Hour*?

**Rice:** I had already done 300 to 400 pages when I stopped to do *Queen of the Damned*. I stopped because *Queen* suddenly came to me. My phone was ringing off the hook with people saying,

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By J. B. MacIntyre

## MIDNIGHT

By Dean Koontz  
G.P. Putnam's Sons

About a year ago, Stephen King came out with his "deliberate" horror novel, *A*. To many readers' disappointment, Mr. King's work was long-winded and never seemed to get around to burning on the burner. Now Dean Koontz gives us what we are owed from *A*—a tale filled with suspense, surprise and spine-tingling horror. Right from the start, he takes us into a world of shape-changers, mad scientists, monsters and inhuman experiments.

The quiet picturesque town of Moonlight Cove in someplace in northern coastal California. Its chief industry, new wave neurotechnology, is owned by Thomas Shadlock. Mr. Shadlock has some unique ideas about changing the course of human evolution. A mad den rise in the murder rate of Moonlight Cove causes the FBI to send an undercover agent, Sam Becker. He meets Trina Lockland, a strong-willed woman who is not about to accept her sister's death as suicide. With the aid of Henry Talbot, a disabled Vietnam vet, they try to put a stop to the terror, and come out with their lives, all before the hour of midnight.

*A* thought is written packed, no-holds-barred horror. The fast-paced story is thoroughly engrossing, despite a rather overabundant. Hardcore horror fans will get a considerable kick out of the many references to other genre books and films.

## FLY IN MY EYE

Edited by Steve Niles  
Arcane Comics

There are some sophisticated books in comic strip form around, aimed at discriminating horror fans. This isn't one of them. Though its back

cover lists names like Chas Barker & Douglas E. Winter, the book isn't black and white format with no color reproduction. Why bother to reproduce Barker's original artwork for the covers of *The Blacks Of Blood* if you're not going to do it in color? Why is the book ninety percent sequential art work, with one manuscript story? Few of the artists show any writing talent. As for the editing, the book is put together like a free for all, lacking any consistency whatsoever.

## WEIRDBOOK 23/24

A 20th anniversary double issue  
Editor & Publisher W. Paul Gansley

This is a special journal. Over the past several years, it has offered new fiction by Stephen King, Darrell Schweitzer and Joseph Payne Brennan, just to drop a few names. It has maintained such a high standard that in 1987 it received a World Fantasy Award. For this special issue, there are tales from master storyteller Al Sarrantino and from Janet Fox and Jessica Amanda Salomonson.

## DEADLINES

By John Skipp & Craig Spector  
Bantam Books

Skipp & Spector are the dynamic duo of horror writers. When they put pen to paper, the paper rattles consistently and the ink runs red. They've been criticized for being too graphic and gory. Yet in their latest novel, *Deadlines*, they show that they can handle a wide variety of emotional ranges and literary styles, giving us a book written a book. Their language is colorful, their characters raw, they show us some new shades of horror.

Meryl takes a left in New York City. As she begins to rummage around the place, she finds a cardstock box sealed and marked, "Do not open 'til Doms-

day." The box contains dozens of manila folders, each with a story by John Paul Brown. As Meryl explores these pages of darkness, she leads us into the midnight horrors of the Big Apple.

Dread isn't a page turner. If the outcome of the central story is a letdown, it may be because Skipp & Spector try to bring real life-quality to their horror and real life is seldom perfect.

## NOCTULPA

JOURNAL OF HORROR  
Edited by George Hetch

This small press magazine, published bi-annually, brings together unique horror stories of all types, an element of poetry and an unrelenting standard for artwork and production format. In its pages, the reader is given yards free writers desired for the insight of horror fiction. *Noctulpa* is a publication that no horror fan should be without, and is quickly becoming a collectors' item.

Some late breaking entries: *Pulpstone*, *The Hardback Magazine* #2. Some good stories by Geoffrey A. Landis, William F. Wu, and Charles De Lint. Published by Pulpstone Publishing, *The Architecture Of Fear*, edited by Kathryn Cromer & Peter D. Pouts, published by Arcane Books. Stories by Ramsey Campbell, Charles L. Grant, Skipp & Spector, Dean Koontz, Joyce Carol Oates and Jessica Amanda Salomonson.

Michael Welden has followed up his *Psychotravels Encyclopedia* with a 48-page *Psychotravels* lexicon. A one-year subscription (not longer available for \$29.95) by Michael Welden, 341 East 9th Street, Suite 22, New York, NY 10003.

Till next time, happy haunting, and don't let the book worms bite!

## LEVIATHAN

Continued from page 35

the film get ahead of the scene, and eventually ingest it, and turn into creatures.

"What we were trying to do was come up with good, creepy creatures that combined man- and fish-like attributes. We based the head of the creature in a deep sea fish with a weird jaw structure and face blended into the structure as people get absorbed. As the creature grows, it has the ability to latch onto and absorb human bodies, which it uses as growing protein to generate itself further. Towards the end of the film, you see that the faces of the people it's absorbed have become part of it.

"There's also lots of tentacles. We had three mechanical tentacles that Richard Lunden and I worked on—Richard is our main mechanical person. Each different tentacle had a different tip on it. One looked like an octopus head, another looked like a barracuda head. George (Comstock) wanted to see the tentacles not just reach out and grab people, but be able to bite people just as if they were creatures in their own. Just give a little more threat to them.

"Then we had a lot of floppy rubber tentacles that could be cut and hooked up and wrapped around whoever for a shot. The mechanical tentacles had several psychotype controllers that were all hooked up to cables and the cables ran down each side of the tentacle. Then we had the floppy ones which we could hang from wires or even just drag across the floor. Sometimes we made them move using reverse a hoist—it would start out wrapped around someone's leg and we would pull it away. In reverse, it would give the idea of reaching out and grabbing somebody by the leg. We designed a lot of quick cuts of different shots to combine the overall effect and create the illusion of rapid movement."

The designs of the genetically altered human beings who form the film's basic enemies—they work the underwater work station and attack their former concerns—are intended to exploit basic fears that people have of tentacles, squids, eels, creepy things. Claire Gillin, "One of the things that I think will be most effective is the 'slap.' That has sort of a creeping terror to it. There's something very basic about that. It looks like a giant leech—it has a lot of sucker mouths on either side that are all going and working. It basically straddles you, sucks blood and burrows inside of you. You think you're a piece of the monster get cut off. From that grows the slug as



actually born out of the piece tentacles, and so you see this slug being belched out of this other piece of creature, which is pretty disgusting. We had a lot of wet, trawler stuff going on.

"I think the slug is basically a very scary thing because it is so organic looking. It's one of the most organic-looking things I've seen on film. It's always surprising and a little bit shocking when you see something on film that's very organic. It's something more than just the standard rubber monster. It's really scary."

One of the most elaborate and frequently glimpsed bits of mechanical equipment for the film, the elaborate underwater diving suite designed by Steve Berg, were mostly shot dry for wet—that is, the actors would be suspended from wires in the diving suite to give the appearance of being in an underwater environment. Rather than using flexible cloth, Berg had to design the suit so that it was entirely metal and yet not restrict the movement of the actor inside the suit. He admitted that he had to cheat a bit in the legs and shoulders to keep the suit from appearing too bulky.

Berg praised his fellow designers on their lot. He credits Ron Cobb with providing entry of the basic design concepts in the film and as a guiding force in the production, and Bill Skarsen, who was the film's major designer and is largely responsible for the final look of the Slack's interior. Cobb has worked on such films as *Conan*, *The Last Starfighter*, *Alien* and *The Abyss*, while Skarsen previously did design work for *2001* and *Black Hawk Down*. Berg also asserted that director George Comstock used and himself very heavily in the design of the film, far more than any other director he had worked for.

Comstock said he is not concerned that there are a couple of other films (*Deep Star Six* and *The Abyss*) coming out that also deal with underwater scenarios. "I'm not too concerned about the *Conan* film (*Abyss*) because it's different from mine and it's later. I like the idea that everybody thinks the same way like I do, but no, it's his saying that people don't want to see different movies set in a hospital. The only thing they share is a location."

While some people have described

*Leviathan* as "an underwater *Alien*," Comstock responded, "I don't think that's true. It's a very easy description to make. But that movie *Die Hard*—they called it 'Rambo in a skyscraper'—but that's not what it is. It's really a *Die Hard* movie has its own significance and a very strong meaning. You don't mess with Mother Nature. It's really very strong."

"Also, *Alien* was a complimented movie. I think *Alien* is one of the greatest movies of all time. But the only resemblance (with *Leviathan*) is that in both movies, the characters are caught in a steel trap."

Comstock believes that one of the keys for making *Leviathan* succeed is having an emotional involvement. He believes the reason that the third *Rambo* film failed was that it failed to maintain the same emotional involvement as the second film, which he directed. "Emotional involvement is paramount in any film," Comstock said. "You can have all the explosives in the world and they won't mean any thing if the audience doesn't have an emotional involvement with the characters in the film. Each film has its own soul and its own purpose, you know? This movie (*Leviathan*) isn't like *Alien*, it has its own soul and its own purpose. We possessed the movie, by the way, and it's huge."

According to Comstock, in order to establish tension in a film, "There is a lot you can do with the soundtrack, with music, and acting. Because if you show it (the threat) too much, you've shown your cards. Hitchcock did this a lot. What happens is that if you pull a string, and then you pull it and pull it and pull it, it breaks, right? What you do is you show them a threat first, you hide what it is, then you show it and then you know it's there, and then you have another string to play with. If you do one or the other all through, it gets boring, especially if you are in a confined space. That's why it's so hard to make Hitchcock's only confined space movies were *Rope* and *Lighthouse*, and both were concerned with people who were wondering what's happening."

Comstock sees himself as a filmmaker who devotes himself to making popular movies, the kind most people will want to see. He feels that what will draw people to his film is "the humanity of it, the characters, and with out being pretentious." Audiences are smart to be able to immerse themselves in *Leviathan*'s story and action without diving into the sea in this spring. The film is more than a "slurp, drink and dive" or a "watch-out-who's-our-friends are" warning movie, it's a high tech thriller that should leave us shivers, gasping for air. □

# FRED OLEN RAY

Perhaps the only man alive who can shoot a 35mm film in three days for \$80,000, director Fred Olen Ray reveals some tricks of the trade

By Bill George

During the early stage of his career, the films of Fred Olen Ray were Hays backyard productions. Only one decade later, Ray's parables for pulpish heroes, vile scientists, and ailing, frisky heroines has expanded into movies with seven-figure budgets. The versatile director/producer's tastes have oscillated from action films to black, slapstick comedy.

During his adolescence, Ray spent his evenings in the hushed, mosquito-laden miles of Fort Lauderdale's "passion pits" (i.e., drive-in theaters), representing his adoration, the sons of the Exploitation Cinema have performed prominent roles in the work of their stature best supporters. "A hand was formed at the drive-in between me and these actors. To actually meet them and have them work for me in my movies, and know that my movies will play at drive-ins to another generation of kids, is really gas." One never doubts that Ray would prefer collaborating with David Carradine, Lee Van Cleef, or Russ Tamblyn to a professional rapport with Hollywood's Best Pack.

Ray's movies have been frequently hardened with post-production tempering, though his own worst critic is himself: "I'm unhappy with most of the films we make. What I mind is if you miss something that I think is a jewel. If I thought there was a jewel in all that coal, and you didn't see that glimmer in there, then I'm disappointed."

Ray's self-designating comments conflict with public opinion. His films are crowd-pleasers in the U.S. and he has developed cult followings in Europe. Married to actress Darna Widmark, Fred Olen Ray is on a roll and advancing into the ranks of *American*. Later this year, he will helm *Peak of the Giest*, a \$4-million "adventure fantasy" described as "1930s tribute to *The Spider and the Moon*."

**HF:** I suspect that *Scalps* (1983), the first of your films to be theatrically released, was made on little more than good intentions

<b>THE BRAIN LEACHER</b> (1977) dir. Fred Olen Ray	<b>CYCLONE</b> (1987) (dir.)	<b>WALKER</b> (1988) dir. Olen Ray
<b>THE ALIENATED</b> (1978) dir. Olen Ray	<b>COMMANDO BOMB</b> (1987) dir. Olen Ray	<b>DEATH HOUSE</b> (1988) dir. Olen Ray
<b>SCALPS</b> (1983) dir. Ray	<b>ROCKY BORN SCORPIO</b> (1987) dir. Olen Ray	<b>SEVERE PAIN</b> <b>WARRIOR</b> (1987) dir. Olen Ray
<b>MONSIEUR</b> (1984) dir. Fred Ray	<b>HOLLYWOOD TRAINWRECK</b> (1987) dir. Olen Ray	<b>ALIENATED</b> (1988) dir. Olen Ray
<b>THE TWIN</b> (1988) dir. Olen Ray	<b>EDDY BLANCK</b> (1988) dir. Olen Ray	<b>THE PHANTOM IMPULSE</b> (1988) dir. Fred Olen Ray
<b>WARRIOR RESPONSE</b> (1988) dir. Olen Ray	<b>DEEP SPACE</b> (1988) dir. Olen Ray	

Ray: The working conditions weren't as bad as you would probably think. We didn't have any major homes, though we did make friends with some people out in the desert who let us use their houses and bathrooms. We would park our cars along the side of an old road in the middle of nowhere and start shooting. We cooked meals or made sandwiches. The scariest thing about *Scalps* is how long it actually took us to make the film. I think we shot about eighteen days to make that disastrous movie. We had a lot of camera trouble and also a lot of processing trouble. The fact that we were shipping our dailies out of town meant that we didn't see them sometimes until three weeks later. We didn't expect, for example, that all the footage would be ruined. For a long time, we didn't realize that things weren't going well because we couldn't see anything. When we saw the dailies, sometimes we had a chance to go back and reshoot things. Other times, we just had to use those shots

Vampire Michelle Bauer starts aging rapidly in *The Tomb*



There is much at stake for Debbie Lamb in *Severely Ailing Vampire*

that were OK. It could have been a much better picture if everything we shot came out all right, because we did have a lot of coverage, set ups and takes, but things would be overexposed or out of focus, or misframed or something. Instead of having to make a picture from what we liked, we had to make it from what we could use.

**HF:** Didn't Gene Hackman and Roger Ebert go out of their way to plug *Scalps* on their TV show?

**Ray:** Yeah, it was their "Dog of the Week." They said it made their dog, Sparky, or whatever its name was—wasn't his Alpo, and that it looked like it was edited with a toothbrush. I thought it was pretty funny. It did make it on Variety's "Top Fifty Grossing Films" chart, not grossing *Rocky Horror* on the New Year's Eve weekend during the time it was released. Of course, *Rocky Horror* had probably been on there for two years at that point.

**HF:** Didn't the distributor of *Scalps*, 21st Century, insist that you shoot some post production footage of nudity?

**Rag:** Yeah, it was the rape scene. They made us rethink it, saying that if we didn't rethink it, they would shoot something and stick it in the film. Of course, we didn't want that. We had shot a rape scene already, but it wasn't real graphic because I just didn't feel that was an important aspect of the picture. I just don't like abuse directed at women. So we shot a very tame scene, and they like [distributor] just basically said, "Look you had better do this, or else." So we went back and did it. I thought it was a very upsetting sequence. It looked awfully vicious and unpleasant to me afterwards.

**HF:** Prior to *Satan's*, you made *The After Death* (1975), which has surfaced on at least two video labels, and *The Brain Leeches* (1977). Could you offer some information on these early efforts?

**"We would park along the side of an old road and start shooting."**

**Rag:** *The Brain Leeches* is probably the best special feature film ever made. It was made for \$285.00, on 16mm black and white. I did it when I worked at a TV station. When I went to work at the station, they had just gotten a new CP 16 camera and their old Arriflex came in was being retired. The *Amblins* in corded around on film and they happened to have an outdated batch of black and white, striped film in their refrigerator, which they gave me. I had the film, the camera, the lights, microphones—everything. Of course, I didn't pay anybody to be in the thing. I only had to pay for the processing and, at that time, black and white was really cheap. I was in at the station, did my mix and titles on video, and transferred it to tape at the same time. I came away with a tremendously bad picture for \$285.00.

Michelle Bauer as the Egyptian Vampire "Nefretiti" in *The Tomb*



**HF:** You habitually hire veterans actors, even as far back as 1978, when you cast Buster Crabbe in *The After Death*.

**Rag:** I had met Buster Crabbe when I was a cameraman on a thing called "Golden Age Olympians," a TV special. I volunteered to be a cameraman on the show, for free, so that I could meet Buster Crabbe. I put his phone number in a pretty nice guy. After *The Brain Leeches* proved such a disaster, I wanted to kind of "move up in a better disaster." I had a little hand-held Relex camera from the station. Being a make-up/special effects artist first and a filmmaker second, I made my own mask and hands, so I made my own monster. I went out in the park and filmed this girl running around, she was chased, killed, and finally dragged away by the monster. There was a motion picture association—a distasteful type of group with a central chapter there in Florida—and I met a guy who was from New York, retired from Jerry Green's *Cinevision*



David did not race lightly with blood and blood.

work with David until later. I worked with John, first.

**HF:** What was your first film with John Carver?

**Rag:** *The Tomb*. It would take a long time to tell you some of the things that had happened. John was a very sweet guy and he had a tremendous sense of humor, a constant joke teller even in extreme old age. I did a thing for *Troma* for this movie, *Demolition Death*



Michael D. Simpson looks his best in *The Phantom Empire*.

company. He was the producer of *I Drank Your Blood*. He was retired but he wasn't interested in film. I showed him my stuff, four rolls of unedited film, on the living room wall. He said, "Great! Can we make a movie?" I said, "Yeah, I think we can make a picture for \$125,000.00." "I put up \$65,000, he put up \$65,000" and he brought in one more person. I had my mother-in-law loan for me with my motorcycle as collateral, and we made *The After Death*. I wrote Buster Crabbe and asked him to come down and do our film. Since he had friends in the area, he accepted. The film actually came in at \$115,000—I came in under budget, even back then.

**HF:** You often hired the late John Carver for your movies. Could you describe your working experiences with the actor, and how you mutually became acquainted with him?

**Rag:** I knew his son, David, very well; I met John through David but I didn't

**From *Messiah*:** To get John into the film, I had taken out scenes of a preacher who is spewing out some paraphrased Biblical quotes. I was going to substitute footage of John playing the same role. The original actor's lines were written on cue cards for John and he was going to read them. Well, I didn't realize that John was an expert on the Bible, in fact, he did a professional recording on the Bible. He looked at the cards—the lines were paraphrased—and he looked at me and said, "There are no more great quotes in the Bible, why did you have to make them up?"

**HF:** There's a curious scene in *Raiders* (1984) where Aldo Ray is supposed to be watching some kind of large, intergalactic artifact. But we see nothing transparent on screen, the artifact's appearance is only conjectured in the dialogue. Did you exclude a special effect as a result of budget limitations?

**Ray:** You know, I can't remember, except I think when we shot that scene we just figured there was just no way to show what was supposed to happen. I guess I could have stopped the camera, like *I Dream of Jeannie*, and just "blinked" it in. I don't quite remember, except that I was in a big hurry. I had some twenty pages to do that day, and I was only at Roger Corman's studio for one day on that. I think I just decided to do it in the dialogue. You're the first person who has ever asked about that, I'd be pretty sure until now. I thought I got away with it. Someone else pointed out to me that a character in *Robinson* twice refers to the hero by his first name even though he has never met him or was never previously introduced to him. There are a couple of things in that particular picture which don't make any sense. How did the FBI guys know, for example, that they should show up at a warehouse? It was a desperate measure, there were pages that I had to throw out because people were throwing bottles at us from the alley windows and dumping garbage on us. We were shooting a light against a dumpster, which I suppose was reflecting back into their windows.

**RP:** Why were certain elements—like



Rose Hagen in *Star Spangled*.

sex and violence, and actress Masha D'Amico's nude scenes—cut from *The Tomb* (1966) after its sale to video?

**Ray:** While we were making the film, a movie called *Creature* was being distributed by Transworld. *Creature*, which starred Klaus Kinski, was a gay little movie, and (the distributors) were encountering lots of trouble because of its nudity problems overseas. I guess Transworld was so scared that



by the time they got hold of *The Tomb*—which was shooting and finishing up the same time that *Creature* was making the rounds at theaters—they decided that it shouldn't look like a horror film, even though that's what it was. So they trimmed almost all of the violence—and almost all of the comedy—out of it. It's got some unusual things in there, but they tried to treat as much of the original thinking out of the film as they could. Kitten Natividad (playing the stripper) is missing from TV prints, even though she still has a credit at the beginning of

hardened with post-production problems.

**Ray:** (The producers) actually tried to change the plot of this film after we made it. It was originally a "monster from space" picture. It had nothing to do with government. It wasn't a cool, little compact story. After it was all shot and edited, they decided they wanted a "government project" theme. They insisted that we shoot seven more days—I could make a whole movie in seven days!—and I shot some laboratory scenes, some more monster sequences, some more inserts, and I shot five different endings. It was very frustrating because even as we were there shooting those things, it made no real sense because I knew that out of the five different things we were shooting, only one of them was going to be used. I knew there were four different endings being filmed that would never see the light of day. I didn't agree with what they were doing for the most part, but I knew if I didn't do the job they would let some editor become a director for a week, and the guy would be directing scenes of my movie. So I

(Continued on page 11)

**"The Tomb is considered to be one of the highest-selling direct-to-video movies ever made."**

the film. Only her feet are shown! When you consider that I shot television coverage for all of those scenes, I had shots of Kitten wearing a bikini while she was dancing, and I had TV coverage for everything but they didn't want for some reason. They just cut up the film and taped up the whole picture for television. Of course, *The Tomb* was the most successful Transworld picture almost to date. I was amazed when Sam Sharman told me that, within the distribution industry, *The Tomb* was considered to be a classic—not of filmmaking, but of distribution and reception. It sold 40,000 units and went Certified Gold almost immediately. It made millions. I was pretty amazed about it. It's considered to be one of the highest-selling direct-to-video movies ever made. A year later, the phone rang and they asked, "Do you want to come back and make two more pictures?" I said, "Wass, but why do you want to have me back?" "We hated *The Tomb*," they said. "Well, perhaps it was better than we first thought."

**RP:** I understand that *Deep Space* was



# ROBOT JOX

*Rides Again*

Empire's swan song hits the big screen with rock'em, sock'em robots battling it out in a post-nuclear age

By Kyle Connolly



It's been uncharitably described as the film that broke Empire's back—the conflict, most ambitious, most troubled production of Charles Band's career as head of that once-prolific, low-budget grand house. The deal memo for the movie in question, *Robot Jox* (formerly *Robo-Jox*, a title that sounded a lot too much like *Robocop* to suit Orion Pictures) is dated October 4, 1985. When the Saturday fantasy film is released in April by Trans World Entertainment, three and one-half years will have passed since director Stuart Gordon first conceived the project.

The reasons for the prolonged delay are numerous, all related to the toppling of Band's Empire beneath the weight of a staggering \$48 million in debts. Whether due to inferior product or the company's attempt to distribute major films, Band was forced to relinquish control of Empire and regroup



under the banner The Bandcamp (its video arm called Half Moon Productions), where Gordon has an office on a film-by-film arrangement. (TWE now owns the Empire catalog, including films that were not yet complete at the time of the takeover.)

Gordon conceived *Robot Jox*—he signs now and then and calls it *Robo-Jox*—while making *Bolt* in Rome. "I'm a big fan of the Japanese Transformer toys," he explained from his office, which overlooks Sunset Boulevard. "While there have been an-

imated cartoons based on these giant robots, no one has ever attempted a live-action feature about them. It struck me that it was a natural fit story for the big screen—and a terrific opportunity to take advantage of the special effects that are available today.

When Gordon brought the idea to Band, Band's first reaction was that it was too big a picture for Empire to tackle. But he later changed his mind and suggested that Gordon team up with stop-motion effects wizard Dave Allen, who contributed several shots to

Della) and film a brief test to determine if the film could be done well—and believably. Not only did Bond want to see if Allen's effects had the right stuff, he also had plans to use the footage to promote the movie.

Gordon approached science-fiction writer Joe Haldeman to write a screenplay based on Gordon's original story— itself based on the story of Achilles from Homer's *Iliad*—having worked with him two years prior on an early Texas stage adaptation of Haldeman's most celebrated book, *The Forever*.

## War has been outlawed and disputes are settled by "robot jox."

War Dennis Paoli (co-author of Gordon's *McArdle* and *From Beyond*) put the final draft through various revisions.

"Joe is part of an Air Force think tank to develop weaponry for the future," explained Gordon, "so he was able to incorporate a lot of actual existing technology into the script and to hypothesize where it might all lead. Then we started storyboarding the film. The reaction to Dave's footage was excellent, and Charlie was able to get the project rolling on a projected \$10 million budget—a huge budget for an Empire film. I think Charlie saw it as Empire's chance to move up into larger budget films."

Six months passed from the time the test footage (which would become *Robot Joe's* opening title sequence) was put together to the time funding was raised. What that figure doesn't take



into account, Gordon said, is that the planning for the film was also going on during that period. "This film needed almost a year of preprod action. We had to set the script and storyboard the effects sequences, then those sequences had to be broken down shot by shot for budgetary purposes. We ended up doing some simplifying and trimming, which is something that happens on every effects picture. You never have enough money to do everything that you want to do. The actual budget ended up being about \$8.5 million."

The film takes place 60 years after a



Alexander robot in *Centauri* made at same gallery.



David Allen with Alexander Centauri and an upside-down Achilles Tank on Location Set.



James Cameron's robot jock, John Wood, in a scene from the movie.



nuclear war has almost destroyed the Earth. War has been outlawed, and all territorial disputes are now settled by single combats fought by towering robots manned by pilots, or "robot jocks," with each warrior representing his country. The technology that would normally have been used to develop warfare is now being used in service of what has come to be known as "The Games." According to Gordon, "It's almost like a sporting event in that it's televised worldwide on a regular basis and people bet on the outcome. They even have live bets on the battlefield for the fans."

In this future world there are two alliances: the Market—the United States and Europe—and the Confederation, which includes the Soviet Union and all Third World countries. Like the board game Risk, each side expands its territory by winning a robot battle.

The robot jock, who is treated like a fighter pilot, has taken on a superstar quality. He's contracted for 10 fights—even though only one robot jock, a John Wayne-type character named The Cowboy, has made it through all 10. The hero of the film is a robot jock who

**Armed with cannons, lasers and rockets, the robots begin with a high-powered assault.**

fight under the name Achilles (played by Gary Graham, Tom Cruise's older brother in *All the Right Moves*). As the film opens, Achilles is about to go into his 10th battle—if he wins he can retire. His opponent is Alexander (Paul Rooker), "the man you love to hate," played by Gordon, characterized as a ruthless, cold-blooded warrior who always kills his adversary. A fighter for the Confederation, he's also been the victor in nine bouts.

The Games are staged like a gun fight, with the robots starting out at opposite ends of the playing field, about a mile apart. Armed with cannons and lasers and rockets, as they walk toward one another each begins his high-powered assault on his opponent. When the robots get close enough to touch, the referees—who fly above the scene in a craft called a "jet floater"—shut down all the robots' long-range weaponry. At that point

only hand-to-hand combat is permitted. As the robots are transformed into closer—the most sophisticated kind in existence—they have the ability to turn into different kinds of fighting machines, including a tank and a space rocket (a submarine mode was considered but dropped due to its prohibitive expense).

During the battle, Alexander finds Achilles' weak spot: his heart. In an effort to protect the fans from a second weapon Alexander has fired, Achilles delivers a throw he robot in front of the propeller. The impact knocks him off balance and he falls over into the





members, crashing several hundred spectators. Even though it is clearly an accident, Achilles is so shattered by the experience that he quits The Games, vowing never to fight again.

The robot replaces him with a female robot jock named Athena (Anne-Marie Johnson, Howard Stern's wife on the TV series *In The Heat of the Night*). She's a "babe"—a new breed of female jock genetically engineered using designer genes. Achilles falls for Athena, but she doesn't really understand his feelings. "It's simply not part of her genetic makeup to care about anyone," explained Gordon. "He realizes she has no chance against a real-world fighter like Alexander, so he decides to come back rather than see her killed. That infuriates her, because she's gone through hell to be chosen for this battle. That's all I'll tell you about the story, other than the last half hour of the movie is solid action."

Kevin Altieri designed the megarog Confederation robot for the opening sequence (Tim Sheerman contributed the skeletal remains of various fallen robots, one of which utilized pieces of *Tupperware*), the plan being to keep him on board for the duration of the film. But he left to take a job with DIC Animation Studios before production resumed. "The further we got into production, the closer it became to be that the person we needed to do the design work was Ron Cobb," said Gordon. "One of the things I like about Ron's design work is that his futuristic machinery looks like it would actually function. It's as if, like Joe Bladenham, a Vietnam veteran, and he also has a tremendous interest and expertise in weaponry and machinery."

Steve Wang was brought in to assist Cobb with the robot detailing, since



Cobb had a limited amount of time to devote to the project. Despite a report in *Cinefantasy* that "everything went to pot" when Cobb departed, Gordon insisted that the transition was virtually seamless. "We were constantly referring to Ron's drawings, and Steve continued to report back to Ron to show him what he was doing and to get Ron's approval. As a matter of fact, Ron and Steve hit it off so well that they've worked together ever since."

Robert Jon began principal photography at Empire's Rome facilities (since sold off in January 1987, and wrapped in April). Gordon then turned over the postproduction efforts to Allen, who had selected El Mirage, a dry lake bed near the Mojave Desert, as the site for filming of the live-action robot skirmishes (Some stop-motion work would be done at Allen's Burbank studios,

the live-action filming made use of the 8-foot, 50-pound cable-controlled models of Achilles and Alexander.)

"There wasn't too much choice as far as shooting outdoors because Empire didn't own a local stage so we could work on," Allen explained. "And even there it would have to have been huge; we would have had to hang and paint a cyclorama and then put tables in and light everything artistically. We would have been into a tremendous set rental situation over an extended period of time, which would have been a huge cash drain."

El Mirage matches for its brilliant blue skies and unobstructed panoramic view, but the year of an on-again, off-again shooting that transpired—Allen and his crew would make a total of three trips out to the desert location—proved to be anything but smooth sailing. The weather was so temperamental Allen considered it a good day if he got two or three good shots in the sun.

"The best wasn't so bad, but as we were in a geographically unstable area, we were at the mercy of the elements," Allen said. "We had to contend daily with clouds, rain, dust storms and hellishly high winds—our outcrops got blown over constantly. Sometimes the dust was so bad you couldn't see in front of you. When that happened, we'd go back to the motel or drive back to L.A. When trained the labored would fill up and our cars were in danger of getting stuck."

Numerous delays caused by the weather—and requests made by Gordon for additional effects—made location shooting more costly than Empire budgeted for. Still, Allen bristles at the suggestion that his unit work might have set the film back. "The location shooting was probably more expensive than [Empire] expected, yeah. Now



## And The Winner Is...

The challenge was to describe the ultimate horror movie of the 90s. The response was incredible. We received ideas of every size and shape and somehow, we had to choose two winning entries.

The first-place winner is awarded an authentic movie prop: the gold cross Suzanne Savarid wore in *Healing Jk*. Second place walks away with a lifetime subscription to *Marvelin*. Thanks to everyone who submitted entries.



### Berrorian Winner

#### First Place ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Remote controls are dangerous things. Every year thousands of people are permanently damaged by accidentally getting in the way of the electronic pulse beams they emit. One such incident involved an Atlanta businessman, who inadvertently moved his hand into the path of a beam from a television remote control. The energy from the pulse, mistaken as tooth filling in his mouth, causing it to send out hundreds of them, very metal shobers that pierced his gums, hand and body. The pain was killed, but the filling lived on inside him. It took control. It grew! It hungared! For so it had spent its entire existence prior to its mutation inside a human's mouth, all it knew how to do was eat.

Christopher Painter  
Altamonte, N.H.

#### Second Place ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I think the ultimate horror film will begin with Pee Wee Herman finding an old skeleton key in his back seat while burying his pet parakeet. Pee Wee finds a lock that matches perfectly with the key. Pee Wee is scared because the lock is in the deepest, darkest corner in his basement. He unlocks the lock and is horrified to find he has unlocked the door to hell in which Satan has been bound for a thousand years. Pee Wee is left to save the universe in a fight ferociously gruesome.

Judy Foster  
Pawson, AL

## ROBOT JOX

Continued from page 17

over the problem wasn't that we were breaking the bank but that we weren't getting money sent in as regularly enough. If they week four we didn't have a check, we had to go back to L. A. Even so, when I still had to put up 10 or 12 guys in a motel."

Even though *Empire* was clearly in the midst of severe financial woes by this time, Allen insists that he was never pressured by Rand to finish. "He understood what we were battling, which was the weather. *Empire's* loss money was costing them interest, but



Artificial robot in cockpit of flying mode.

we weren't that expensive—our efforts came in at less than 50% of total budget."

How was Gordon able to maintain control over the production if he wasn't present at the El Mirage site?

"I did go out to the desert area a couple of times, just to kind of say hi to and check in. But my feeling was, both Dave and I were needed in the story boarding. We both knew that for what what was supposed to be happening, and I felt confident that I could turn it over to Dave and he would do it as planned—which he did. Dave is an artist in his own right and has to be given his own measure of control—to run the ship as he sees fit. It was very much a sharing of the power."

"Otherwise I was in constant com-



munication with Dave during the post, even while I was in preproduction on *The Terry Winner* for Disney (a project Gordon had to turn over to Joe Johnston when a bout with high blood pressure dictated a three-month rest). He would be sending me footage as he was shooting it, and I would make suggestions. I also supervised the footage as it was edited into the picture. I know he and his crew went through hell out there, but the results were so spectacular that it was worth it."

Gordon scoffs at the industry talk that *Robot Jox* was responsible for the fall of the *Bird Empire*. "I don't believe that the picture sank *Empire*, though it certainly didn't help," he admitted. "It is true, however, that it was the most expensive picture *Empire* ever produced—three or four times their normal budget. It also had the longest postproduction schedule. But even if everything had gone like clockwork, it would still have required a year of post. Charlie had convinced me that *Robot Jox* would put *Empire* on the map, financially speaking. Unfortunately we were not able to get the movie done in time to save the company."

Gordon is currently developing a half-hour horror anthology series for HBO titled *Apocalypse*. "Each week we go down the corridor of this insane apartment and open a different cell door—we believe what it was that drove that particular person mad," he says. "I had the dream in his eye at the moment is his new version of *The Pit* and the Pendulum, scripted by Dennis Pash, which will be shot at the Pacific Studios outside Los Angeles. For his version, Gordon plans to "go back to Pee," as the 1961 AIP film used very little of Pash 20-page story.

"I happen to like the Roger Corman/Vincent Price version, but today's audience demand a different approach to the material. We can get much more visceral about things now. Corman had to avoid some of the elements of Pee's story that were considered a little much at the time the movie was made. I've done research about the Spanish Inquisition, specifically torture—the various methods used back then and so forth. All of that will be in this movie. I also did a lot of reading about Torquemada, the Grand Inquisitor of the Inquisition. In his day he was known as the Leonardo da Vinci of torture—he was constantly looking for new ways to take people apart."

Reinforcing the almost Biblical plot with which he has been dragging the rather necessary business of torture, Gordon stopped and smiled. "I wonder people expect to see my hands dripping with blood when I answer the door."

## FRED OLEN RAY

Continued from page 53

decided to hang in there, to try to protect as much of my film as I could. I just kept lighting in the last cut. Some people like it. I don't like the musical score, I thought it severely damaged the picture. I thought, cutting a lot of things hurt it a lot. But there are a few moments that I was pleased with or proud of. For the most part, people who don't know about those troubles seem to think the picture's OK. But for a million and a half dollars, it should be a little better than just "OK."

**HF:** Let's move on to *Mel Brooks' Chaucer's Women*. End you have any problems marketing the film because of its explicit violence?

**Ray:** Overwise, I was into tremendous censorship problems. The combination of sex and violence, even though it was comedy, gave me a lot of problems overseas. I did manage to sell four or five foreign territories, and we did go into a profit, but on the overall the profit did not justify the picture. It taught me a lesson. I usually don't make a very bloody picture. But I was going to try to make the ultimate drive-in movie that had everything, and lots of it—a lot of nudity, a lot of phony fantasy gore. The foreign territories don't mind the nudity, they love the nudity. But the nudity, in association with the violence, is the problem. However if you think about it, there's only one shot in the whole film where a chainsaw is actually touching anybody—

**HF:** Michelle Beale's death scene—

**Ray:** Yeah, otherwise it was all below-censor. We were standing all around the male victim in a half circle throwing blood, and the blood is coming in from all directions that couldn't have possibly been coming from where the (victim) was being (chainsawed). It's coming from censors left and censors right—it's pretty silly. The lady at the MPAA (ratings board) said, "Well some people might think that is funny. But you can't know for a fact that everyone will know that is supposed to be funny." I told her it was pretty obvious to me. In Britain, where censorship is really rough, I'm sure they made quite a few cuts. They weren't even allowed to use the word "chainsaw" on the posters; a picture of a chainsaw is sandwiched between the words *Hollywood* and *Monsters*. I was told that I would never sell *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers* in Germany or the U.K., but I did. I've sold *Chaucer* in some of the hardest-to-sell territories in the world. *James Earl Ray* never had a problem in Germany because of *Down With Smith's Sporting Stamp* where he

had to cut off. That was censored, which I thought was really stupid because it was played for comedy. I recently made a picture, which is almost a remake of *Chaucer*, called *Severely Mild Vampire*. I decided to try the same formula again without the heavy-duty gore. I basically took the same cast, and the same structure, and made a new picture. This one I did as long as I could get Brit. Richard to play the "Madame," what *Guns n' Roses* played in the other film.

**HF:** Did you just complete *Severely Mild Vampire*?

**Ray:** Actually, *Vampire* is a couple of films back. After *Vampire* we did a film called *Alchemist*—it's a "Female Terminator Meets The Amazing Spider-Man" type of movie.

**HF:** You also recently made a sword and sorcery film.

**Ray:** *Dragon Sword*, with Lyle Waggoner, Ross Thatcher, and Jim Minkema.

**HF:** Why did you decide to make a "period piece"?

**Ray:** It certainly would have never so-



Sybil Danning stars in *The Phantom Empire*.

turned to us if Roger Corman didn't have the sets standing from *Wizard of the Lost Kingdom—Part II*. Hearing about those standing sets sort of inspired us to run down there, before they tore them down, and shoot for two days. We always try to pick projects that seem like fun, and it sounded like a lot of fun to do.

**HF:** Why hasn't *The Phantom Empire*, which was scheduled for release a couple of years ago, made its debut?

**Ray:** It's coming out (on video) in March. The film ran afoul of censored dealings by dishonest distributors (Film Ventures International).

**HF:** Would you offer a synopsis of the movie?

**Ray:** It's a 1930s serial style adventure

in the tradition of *Journeys to the Center of the Earth*. A band of explorers goes searching for the lost city of El-Yoh and encounters dancers, cave girls, robots, apes, and Sybil Danning as the leader of the cave-girl gang. We have all kinds of fantastic vehicles and even a little "topless outfight" wrestling. The movie was made in six days. We used Kathy the Robot, though we changed her head. I also took the head cover from the "Logan's Run" TV series, borrowed the big bugs in barbed wire from Mel Brooks' *History of the World, Part I*, and used the dinosaurs from a movie called *Planet of the Dinosaurs*.

**HF:** Isn't Jeffrey Beaulieu (*Conan*) included in the cast?

**Ray:** Yes. We made him a student of archaeology from Middlesex University. He had been in *Cyborg* previous to this, so I already knew him. I didn't realize he was my next-door neighbor. He lived two houses down the street from me.

**HF:** Do you have any speculation plans for the future projects?

**Ray:** Ross (Hagen) and I are thinking about making a movie called *The Phantom Pit*. It would be about a drive-in. It could be sort of semi-satirical, about my time in the late sixties and early seventies haunting the drive-ins. We could tell three great satirical stories on drive-in people. Kids under twelve years of age are not invited here, so I want a scene with Roger Corman as the guy in charge of the admission booth. We could have a guy drive up and claim his daughter is only two years of age. Corman would say, "Young lady, would you step out of the car?" and he'd make her take a polygraph test. The kid would be grided and finally break down, admitting "OK, OK, I'm twelve," and Roger would say, "OK, that'll be—" and make her pay the admission price. The film on the drive-in scene would be one that we'd shoot as well, like turning Ross Thatcher and Bill Smith. And everybody in that film would be a drive-in star.

**HF:** Is anything else scheduled for video release?

**Ray:** *Camp* is coming out with *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers—The Special Edition*, which is the XXX-rated, for violence, edition. I'm putting together the really violent version for them, so they can release it as its complete edition. And coming out on video is the *Miss Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers* *Becky Bop* special. It's stoppers performing with censors for the title of *Miss Hollywood Chainsaw Hooker*. I'm putting it in for a laugh, just for the hell of it. I want to see naked girls trotting around with chainsaws. □

# HEADHUNTER

A vengeful demon invades Miami in this energetic thriller



—By Bruce J. Schoenfeld—

Only the covering of heads can revitalize an ancient African demon who follows its fleeing worshippers from Nigeria to Miami in *Headhunter*, the newest entry in the tribal/cult horror genre. It is produced and written by Wayne Crawford (who also stars) and Andrew Lane whose previous collaboration's include *Night of the Comet* and the under-rated *Jake Speed*.

*Headhunter* qualifies as a minor addition because it focuses more on the relationship of the cops investigating the gruesome murders rather than elaborating on the mystique and origin of the demon and the rituals of the displaced Nigerian natives. It does not rely with each previous film as *The Behemoth* and *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, but it does succeed as a "buddy, buddy" cop picture. Overall, it's entertaining, well-acted and masterfully directed by Francis Schaffer (*Wind To Kill*).

Two cops, Pete Graham (Crawford) and Katherine Hays (Kay Lenz) are assigned to investigate a gruesome murder—a despoiled man is found, but his head nowhere in sight. The cops don't have any clues. Things are not going well for Graham, beside the horrific murder, his wife, Denise (Anne Gashenck) of seven years just left him—for another woman. His personal life is in shambles and headless bodies continue to pile up on the job.

At the site of another murder, Sergeant Jara (Sam Williams), a Shaman—spiritual leader and leader

of this southern African tribe—comes forward and tries to warn Graham about the demon they are facing. "He's our curse, now he is yours too. He has come to reclaim the souls that have escaped his reach. By covering the heads, he separates the soul from the body. The head is his to keep and he now takes with the human spirit." The *Headhunter* will only stop when a congregation is ready to slay him.

The action moves very briskly as more tribal members, including Jara, are beheaded. Graham and Hall, in separate incidents, are tricked and then lured into a trap by the demon's charmless ability. The *Headhunter* assumes Graham's identity and leaves a message on Katherine's answering machine telling her to meet him by a deserted railway station. In a harrowing sequence, Katherine is drawn into the middle of a ritual ceremony where



Graham (Wayne Crawford) has to find a way to destroy the Demon.

she is the intended victim. She narrowly escapes after she is chased through abandoned railway cars. The real Graham shows up in the nick of time and Katherine, not knowing if he's the real McCoy, makes him play 20 questions at gunpoint until she is convinced.

The two cops need no more convincing that this *Headhunter* really does exist, but they do have one major problem. Their Captain (Steve Karnaky) couldn't care less about the plight of these frightened people, he doesn't believe in monsters and he isn't too fond of Graham. Their request for more assistance is denied and they're forced to have to confront the demon alone.

At his local bar, Graham gets an unexpected call from his estranged wife. She wants him to come right over to discuss their situation. He goes home to find an uncharacteristically affectionate Denise waiting for him. Graham is simultaneously confused and repulsed by her affections and he escapes himself to the bathroom. Unbeknownst, he is greatly repulsed when he sees his wife's head floating in the bathtub. The *Headhunter* has been dressing up in women's clothing again. It reveals its true identity and Graham jumps through the window and escapes. Knowing that Katherine is now in danger, there is only one thing left for him to do. He bursts into



Katherine Hall (Kay Lenz) is lured into a trap and narrowly escapes.

the local hardware store and grabs a suitable weapon—a chainsaw (what else)? He rushes back to her house to find the savage demon about to make cheap-arse of his partner. After cutting his way in, he confronts the demon and says, "All right Hanger Hooper, let's dance." In their final battle, Graham and Hall finally destroy the *Headhunter* by giving it a taste of its own medicine.

What makes this film work is the rapport between Crawford and Lane. They seem to know each other so well that they probably can guess what color socks each is wearing. Obviously,



Even here, the monster is at work

extra care was taken to make them believable people. After chasing someone for several miles, Graham is creditably still panting and sweating several scenes later. He just doesn't have much luck. Alone in the house with Katherine, he asks her why they never slept together. Giving it one second thought, she affectionately replies, "Because you're an asshole." Crawford made a wise decision in steering his character away from the Eastwood, macho-man image. He is very comfortable in front of the camera and he paints a very credible portrait of an average cop going through tough times, he is especially good in the scene where he confronts his wife and her lover.

Schaeffer and Crawford were very generous with the amount of screen-time they give Kay Lenz, and she responds by stealing the show. Thank you for not casting Heather something or other in this role. Anything but a Hollywood glamour girl, Lenz's street-wise good looks give the appearance that she has been around the block a few times. She is very solid in the role of Katherine.

Unfortunately, in paying a lot of attention to many small details, some major plot holes were bypassed. The Headhunter, who has superhuman strength when assuming human form, had ample opportunity to off these two cops, but didn't. It is also never explained how the demon can travel many miles in a matter of seconds. After escaping the clutches of his wife's house, Ovaltine rushes to Katherine's home (near across town) to find Mr

Monster has been there for a while. But the biggest disappointment is that the climactic battle just doesn't deliver the goods. At best we only get quick peeks at the huge, ugly demon. Crawford looks (pathetically) waving a chain saw (he could have used lessons from Leatherface or Dennis Hopper). The big battle is a series of quick cuts and is rather sloppily done. But it does have one nice touch. Playing on the TV set in the house is *The Beloved Son* (Damon and scenes from his climax are nicely interwoven with the fight at hand). You won't lose your head over this one, but *Headhunter* offers a few good thrills, fast pacing and Kay Lenz. It's worth a peek.



Only disappointed if you're this dying cop



# THE RETURN OF SWAMP THING

America's favorite half man/ half vegetable is back  
—but with a twist (and not of lime, either)

By W.D. Gernard

Swamp Thing has lurched out of the marsh and into to battle evil once again. Dick Durock returns in the title role and Louis Jordan resurrects the archvillain Dr. Arcane in *The Return of Swamp Thing*, which also stars Heather Locklear as Abigail, Arcane's stepdaughter and "Swampy's" blossoming love interest.

The sequel borrows heavily from the story and atmosphere of DC Comics' *Swamp Thing* series created by Len Wein and Bernie Wrightson. The result is a vivid, fast-moving and frequently funny film that successfully walks the line between horror, action and camp comedy.

Directed by Jim Wynorski (*Slot of This Earth*, *Death Shaker II*, *Chop-pong Mall*), the script for *The Return* is credited to Derek Spenser and Grant Morris. (Wynorski points out that Derek Spenser is really a pseudonym for several people who worked on the script; himself included—see sidebar.) The project was produced by Benjamin Melniker and Michael Ustin, the team that co-produced the upcoming film, *Patience*. Ustin incidentally is a re-



quired authority on comic books.

The story begins with sweet, innocent Abigail's decision to finally work out her problems with stepdad Arcane after talking it over with some leafy pals at her plant shop. (Aside from helping to establish character, her rap-

port with this greenery is prophetic of her future relationship with Swamp Thing.) Although there was neither hide nor hair of a Mrs. Arcane in the original, this digression is quickly swept away by the pacing of the film.

Arcane looks remarkably good, con-



rehearsing the last time we'd seen him he had been transformed into a gruesome bear beast and was hacked to death by Swampy himself. The regeneration formula—the accomplishment of pre-Swampy Thing Allen Holland and the goal of Arcane in the first movie—was responsible for the cause of his initial conversion and is implausibly the cause of his momentous recovery. The original showed Holland's brilliant discovery of the poison, which combined a plant cell with an aggressive animal nucleus. When Arcane raids his lab and shoots his sister, Holland attempts to save the highly volatile formula, setting himself on fire in the process. Covered with flames, he plunges into the swamp, rising later as the heroic Swampy Thing.

The good doctor is still hard at work trying to perfect his formula, but experience has taught him to use others as guinea pigs instead. His bright, slightly impressed-looking laboratory (in the original, it was confined to a table in his bedroom) is stocked with researchers and technicians as well as a few failed genetic projects: a half man/half elephant is ludicrous refer-

**The camp script allows Louis Jourdan to play the dastardly doctor with even more evil relish and merciless glee.**



Dr. Arcane (Louis Jourdan) has created a horde of genetic mislaiders.

ence to *The Elephant Man*, a human/cockroach combo and other ambiguous creatures.

Needless to say, Arcane uses Abigail—or more specifically, her blood—as the key to his regeneration formula. She escapes (for the time being), befriends Swampy and learns the ugly truth about her stepfather's experiments.

The camp script allows Louis Jourdan to play the dastardly doctor with even more evil relish and merciless glee. His new, improved private security force has a few carnivorous, leotard-clad loyalists (including Wyndham's regular lovely Monique Gabrielle) in its ranks, which might account for some of the laughing that goes on.

Dick Durock, as Swampy Thing, finds himself in an expanded role in the sequel, battling not only Arcane's bad guys but an escaped mutant—appropriately named Leechman—as well. In the first film, he speaks rarely, and when he does, it's slowly and haltingly. Assembled because of further regeneration, in the new film he smoothly delivers superhero lines before smashing the nasties to a pulp. And he manages this from under makeup over 40 pounds of obscuring make-up.

As Abigail, Heather Locklear plays a California vegetarian who falls for the plant man. She maintains a straight face in the most ridiculous situations—the ideal comic-book heroine. She also has a few fan moments, such as a throw away line about the TV series she co-starred in, *Tel' Noche*.

Comedy constantly creeps up in *The Return*, enhancing the poppy, comic-book feel of the film. One of Arcane's henchmen reads *Murphy's Law* magazine on duty and brags of his Central American schooling. A parent named Gips is almost always at Arcane's side, at one point he turns to it and says, "Gips, am I a fool without a mind or have I made a mistake in trusting those two idiots?" How Jourdan gets to parody himself, recalling his return to the land in the original Gips over 25



years ago. In addition, two local kids provide comic relief throughout in their own vignettes as they remember fondly of Swamp Thing and later try to get a picture of him for a sleazy talent.

Carl Fullerton (Newark, N.J./in *PX*) was responsible for the massive Swamp Thing make-up and Dean Cain (*The Tower Heist*, *Day of the Dead*) acted as Make-Up Effects/Costume supervisor. Their jobs were

made all the more difficult by the soggy conditions they had to work with: almost all of the movie was shot on location in Savannah, Georgia.

The Return, for all its very tasty and digestible substance, is not without its disappointments. While its content might fascinate a young child, seasoned movie watchers might find some depth lacking. Surely there were interesting details—whether about Aracene's marriage or the possibly dan-

gerous workings of his lab apparatus—that could have been followed up. (And what happened to Aracene's grand scheme of the first film, controlling the world's food supply with the formula?)

Although the movie has its share of interesting mutations, it will disappoint hardcore genre addicts. *The Return of Swamp Thing* uses a fan, coating script, and fast moving pacing to get its message across. □

## A TALK WITH THE DIRECTOR: JIM WYNORSKI

**HP:** What sort of look were you trying to achieve in the movie?

**JW:** I've always been a big fan of comic books. When I was offered the film *The Return of the Swamp Thing*, I was particularly intrigued with doing it because it would be interesting to try to pull comic-book look out of a film. I tried to avoid all my other pictures in that look, but never really had the budget to do so. In this one, I think I was able to get away with performance and an overall cinematic look that has some elements that you see in a comic book. No scene goes on for a long duration. Comics move very quickly and encompass the whole story in one or two panels. That's what I was trying to do in this film.

**HP:** Is a somewhat reminiscent of the *404TV* series *Darkman*.

**JW:** I liked the look of the *Darkman* series. I just didn't like the content. They made fun of Batman and Robin too much. Batman and Robin always looked around and looked at the camera and said, "Oh, what a great time we're having!" It's still played for laughs, but the laughs come out of the characterizations.

**HP:** Did Doug Ducek have difficulty acting through all that make-up?

**JW:** With 40 pounds of rubber on him, the only way he could act was with his eyes. I really think he did a fabulous job, especially for a guy who doesn't usually get these parts. Here's a stunt man who also played the Swamp Thing in *Craven's* film.

I worried him back mainly because I knew he could take the hell of rubber. I worked with him when I first started out in the business, and knew he was quite professional and easygoing.

**HP:** Did you shoot in an actual swamp?

**JW:** We never went to a studio set. There's only one shot in the film that wasn't shot in Savannah, Georgia, and that's the shot of the flower coming out of the girl's foot at the end.

**HP:** Were there a lot of problems with location shooting?

**JW:** In the press kit it's called a "do-



matized swamp. Michael Ustin who wrote that, didn't go very far into the swamp. There were alligators, poisonous snakes, giant mosquitoes and everything else you could possibly want.

**HP:** The swamps lent a nice atmosphere to the film.

**JW:** That's why I went there. I'd been in Georgia before and knew they had the swamps that most appreciated what people think of as swamps. The first Swamp Thing had a more, very first, but it didn't have tree roots and the murky, bubbly kind of swamp that I wanted for this picture because it had a comic-book feel.

I'm not knocking *Swamp Thing* at all—I think it's really fun picture. It's always harder for a director to break new ground rather than extend old ground. I think Wes Craven did a great job with the first one and it was a lot of fun to do just two. But I decided to take a different tack with more so people wouldn't say, "Oh, more of *Thing*."

It's difficult to do a "2" and live up to the success of a "1." That's why a lot of his fail because they try to give you more of the same. I deliberately went the other way around. I can't give them the same story—I want to give them something different. And still keep the same elements of course.

**HP:** Did you work closely with script writers Derek Spencer and Grant Morris?

**JW:** There is no Derek Spencer. Grant Morris had written the original script that was going to be produced for Showtime. Between the time it was

written and the time it went before the cameras, a number of people worked on the script, including myself.

If you look at the other films I've made, you'll see a lot that influenced elements in *The Return*. A director of mine brings his own vision to the movie, and that influences me.

**HP:** Several scenes could have been edited for more pace. Was there a deliberate effort to avoid it?

**JW:** There is no blood in the movie. I purposely went for that because this kind of movie is not going to play to pure fans.

If you look at "E" tag on this picture it's going to cut out a huge portion of my audience. I want to be able to show that to a six-year-old girl. I've shown it to kids who all these outrageous looking to it. They enjoy it for the superficiality of Swamp Thing and the adults can get a little more out of it if they know the "B" jokes.

**HP:** You also kept the sex to a minimum.

**JW:** I've been caricatured as a person who puts a lot of sex in the movies I've done. Like *Meat & Three Bones* and *Death Studies*. In this one, I made a conscious effort not to do that because it plays to 12-year-olds.

This kind of film is like a Twinkie. You can eat one just about any time of the day or night. It doesn't sit in your stomach and it's not enjoyable while you're devouring it. Of course, you never saw any heavy characters—not talking—swamp, but it has to own its own. I'm hoping that the film will be looked at as a fanciful fairy tale with some little extras. If you look at *Grease* or *Barry Mink*, they're superficial for kids, but have a lot of adult innuendo in them.

**HP:** Any plan to do a part three—*Swamp Thing*?

**JW:** If there are, I haven't even as yet. It's not a yes. Most directors want to skip away from a three or part four, but I love the character. I would certainly do a part three, four and five as well. I really enjoy it.



## JACK ARNOLD

Continued from page 23

Scott has made a mesh box for his living quarters. Large drops of water begin to fall on the top of his "new home." The problem confronting Arnold was how to make giant water droplets appear in proportion to Scott, who is now an inch tall. He remembers, "We tried everything from bucket ladders to turning faucets on and off, but nothing worked or looked like an oversized droplet. Then I remembered when I was a teenager, I found some unusual 'bellows' while rummaging through my father's drawers. Though I didn't know what they were, I found them perfect as water tanks to drop from the roof of our apartment building. They'd splatter on contact, and when my parents found out, I almost did, too."

"Well, I turned to my own unaided wits if I had had randoms...several did. We filled them up with water and dropped them on the giant mesh mesh box. They worked perfectly! I ordered a hundred of them and set them up on a treadmill. When the production office looked over my call sheet, they called me in to explain the expenditure. I told them it was a hard picture!"

"That audience must have thought we had a helluva party! We did!"

Arnold's next craft effort was *The Space Children*. The story centers around a group of children living in a shift-side trailer park near a missile base. Their parents are technicians working on a secret rocket armed with a nuclear warhead that can instantly destroy any city on the world.

The children notice a strange beam of light coming down from the sky and follow it to see where they discover a glowing, brain-like creature that "thinks" to them. It ensnares the children to do its bidding and runs the space launch resulting in the rocket's destruction. The alien returns to outer space and the children inform their parents that all the world's nuclear weapons have been destroyed in a similar manner. The film ends with one of the mothers remarking that "the world has been given a second chance." A biblical quotation is shown: "Yea, I say unto you, except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The 63-minute feature starred Michel Ray, who distinguished himself in such films as *The Naked Gun* and *The Fox Star*. Also seen are Johnny Washbrook from TV's *My Friend Flicka*, Sandy Vanhook from *WB's TAMM*, Raymond Bailey from *Twentieth* and *Incredible Shrinking Man*,

Larry Penning from TV's *Ripcord*, Johnny Crawford from TV's *Reflexes* and Russell Johnson from *20 Cans From Outer Space*.

Like *It Came From Outer Space*, this movie is set deep in atmosphere and less in direction and well-produced.

"I'm very fond of *The Space Children*. I had a lot of fun working with these kids—when I could keep them from their awful stage mothers. The kids were really into making believe and understood exactly what I wanted from them."

After directing assignments at Metro Goldwyn Mayer and Paramount, Arnold returned to U-I where he was asked to direct *Monster on the Campus*.



In this updated version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Arthur Franz stars as Professor Donald Blake. The professor has a one-month to psychiatric fight shipped to the college campus. It is believed that the fish has been preserved by atomic radiation. While transporting the fish in its container, the professor cuts his hand and accidentally bathes the wound in the fish's isotope water. He blacks out and returns into an earlier form of man—one with tail and fangs. During his transformation, he takes a pretty name (Helen Westcott) and a policeman (Ross Elliott).

At first unaware of his crimes, the professor soon realizes that he must be the killer. He retreats to a mountain cabin. In an act of self-destruction, the professor injects himself one last time. As he dies, he brings out the beast and leads the police on a chase. A shoot out follows and Blake is killed. As the police gather around the monster's body, he slowly changes back into Professor Blake, becoming human again in death.

Arnold had misgivings about the film. "At the time, the science-fiction phase was beginning to die out. Also, I felt it needed re-writing. However, we were on a tight schedule. I did the best I could, but it needed more time and additional writing." The producer was a friend, so he agreed, and made another box office and critical success.

More importantly to genre fans, though he would make ten more movies, this was Jack Arnold's last sci-fi film.

### EPilogue

In the early 80's, Jack Arnold tried to sell U-I a remake of *The Creature Walks Among Us*, the last film in the *Black Lagoon* trilogy and the only one Arnold wasn't involved with when it was originally shot. Scripts were written, story boards designed, but nothing came of it.

His experience with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* was even more frustrating.

In 1960 20th Fox produced an enjoyable version of the story in Cinema Scope and DeLuxe color—despite Irwin Allen's direction. However, Arnold knew that Fox's story was far away from the original novel and he wanted his picture closer to the real thing.

He teamed up with special-effects master genius Albert Whitlock, knowing they could bring their vast knowledge and years of cost-cutting know-how to what would otherwise be a very costly picture. Scripts were written, sketches and storyboards designed and actual movie paintings produced.

Then Arnold was taken ill and had to undergo surgery. While he was away, John Landis, who was serving as the film's executive producer, had the film budgeted by Lorber's English production manager. His figure was considerably higher than anything Arnold or Albert suggested and Universal shelved the project.

Maybe some other studio will have more sense! A new Jack Arnold film would be something to look forward to, unlike movies that spend more time on action and special effects than they do on story and detail.

Jack Arnold was always a craftsman. He was interested in developing a good story and extending excellence from his casts and crews, and they responded with love and dedication.

His films have earned millions—and they have entertained, enriched and enlightened millions of fans. He's been described as having versatility, talent and integrity. Generosity and kindness can be added to the list.

Thank you, Jack Arnold, for countless hours of motion pictures and television entertainment! □

**ANNE RICE**  
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"How could you leave us with the cliff-hanger ending?" so I felt that I better do that now I'd also come to a similar idea with *The Witching Hour*. It's not as contemporary New Orleans and I have always been writing about New Orleans in the past—I needed to go back there to finish it.

**HP:** Do you feel some of your ideas have been stolen and used in other vampire movies?

**Rice:** That is what I have been told. I avoid vampire movies because this is such crowded turf. We all influence each other. I have been influenced by Stephen King and Peter Straub and Shirley Stine. I can't help it. You can not read great books and not be influenced by them. I think it is legitimate to be inspired by other people's material. If things in my book are going to be considered part of a new myth and people use it, I can not help but feel honored.

**HP:** What are your other favorite authors?

**Rice:** I have to go back many years to find my favorite author, Algernon Blackwood. He is a British writer who wrote *Ancestral Shadows* and *Sacred Worship*. Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, who wrote *Carmilla* in the 1870s and Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* had a great influence on me. I would love to write a great haunting novel that contains *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Hound of Baskinville* by Shirley Jackson.

**HP:** What scares you?

**Rice:** Everything. I am scared of the dark and of being in the house alone. I love lots of pets in the house.

**HP:** Where does Anne Rice go now?

**Rice:** I'd really love to do *The Witching Hour* and it's related to *Queen of the Damned* so that it involves the Tennessee of psychic detectives. And it involves their investigation of the Family. The novel is really in my head. It would be like automatic writing when I get home. I also want to do a fourth vampire novel called *The Body* which was an adventure. I can't say I have done a novel called *Lily* which is coming out in June by Ballantine which is my very highly romantic version of the 1940s black & white mystery movies that scared me half to death.

**HP:** Are you surprised by the reception of *Queen of the Damned*?

**Rice:** I was surprised I hoped it will be popular. I was astounded by how many people came forward to buy it—they did not wait for the paperback. What destroys writers is indifference, not being read. To me the greatest aspect of success—the only real aspect that

counts—is the fact that those people are reading the book and telling other people about it. It's wonderful. I never thought it would be number one on the *New York Times* bestseller list. I just thought it was too weird. □

## NIGHTLIFE

Continued from page 43

"A man who goes down swinging: Verbs flourish here a good fight, and thanks he's going to win." In preparation for the talented actor's exploding third scene, make-up effects Craig Reardon (*The Gate II*) did a full-head read of Anton. Anton had heard of other actors' discomfort and claustrophobia during this unpleasant, twenty-minute process, but instead found the experience wonderfully uplifting. "If I had it to do over again," insisted the actor with pure Goyesque aplomb, "I would do it all over."

Scott Gerses made an indelible impression on press audiences in *Crossed* when he proved to be a talented juvenile actor who wasn't smugging. And in a sense, *Nightlife* is the film in which Scott Grimes grew up.

*Nightlife* also features Anthony Geary, Lisa Palmer (*Monster Squad*), Phil Proctor of Fimberg Theatre fame and Cheryl Pollack (*My Best Friend Is a Vampire*) as Archie's zombie-baiting, tombey outside. Producer Christine Lippencott spoke of *Nightlife* and its talented cast and crew with an infectious exuberance and a rare grasp of the elements that make a successful shudder-chiller. "I'm a horror movie fan and in many ways, I'm still an adolescent," explained Lippencott, who began his film career as Alfred Hitchcock's publicist on *Roméo et Juliette*. He's also been a marketing and production consultant on *Deceit*, *Flash Gordon*, *Alien*, *Amityville 3* and *Madhouse IV*. Along with college drama George Lucas and Gary Kutz, Lippencott formed the Star Wars Corporation, forever revolutionizing the field of movie-to-les and merchandising ("It was a combination of enthusiasm and naivete," he recalled fondly). He acknowledged that the richness of his background makes his project with both the enthusiasm of a green dar and the expertise of a genre professional. "It's the most important thing I bring to a project."

With *Nightlife*, Lippencott promises genuine laughs along with the gory frights. "I wanted to make a horror film with elements of black comedy," *Nightlife* is funny. But once the horror starts, it's relentless. □

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In my never-ending quest to bring to you an entertaining and informative magazine, I have enlisted the help of everyone I have ever met. Luckily, everyone wholeheartedly plunged in to help.

This may sound like an Academy Award acceptance speech, but thank-you credits. Every time I am losing my mind, Blake Gerard is there to remind me I never had one. I supply the books and Blake the content. Thanks for all the extras. Florine McCann and Joe Norton were always there to lend a hand—it's much appreciated. We used to write a book together without our successful punchlines—thanks Rita T., Dennis F., Tommy A., Bill A. and Leonardo P. East, of course.

I certainly looked out with my contributors. Bill George ate and wrote *Horrorplex*—I couldn't ask for more. Many of the photos printed are from his collection—thanks Bill. J.B. Macabe (I want to see your lunch certificate) promotes *Horrorplex* almost as much as himself—thanks. More thanks to be extended to the West Coast. To Mr. Eddie Kessler. If anyone can rewrite the Bible, you can—thanks for your enthusiasm and epic work. I put out an SOS and Dennis Fischer answered it—talk about the cavalry charging in the nick of time. To George Carr—me and Eddie are fighting for the right to you. You're adoll. Back East, Mr. Larry Maslow. Poor Larry, if you weren't so good we wouldn't keep asking you to rewrite your pieces—thanks for the great work. We would like to thank Gary and Sue Newble and Joe Yarnicola for their generous contributions to our One-Gimmick article. Additional thanks to Fred Glen Ray, Wayne Crawford, Jim Wynerkand Richard Lynch for being available, honest and delightful.

A huge thanks to my wife Deborah and my beautiful son Bradley for being the absolute best. And double thanks to two very special people, Murray and Shirley. —Bruce J. Schenckel

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

There are many big score flicks heading our way—as bold on sight! We didn't get to it this issue, but look for major coverage on Jim Cameron's *The Abyss*. William Shatner finally takes the helm—on *Star Trek V*. All this controversy surrounding Michael Rooker's portrayal of the Caped Crusader has helped make Batman the most anticipated film in recent memory—we'll take a sneak peek at Tim Burton's latest. Stuart Gordon keeps his lights ablaze in *Moodie: The Pit and the Pendulum*. W.B. Gerard will have a special, tonight retrospective for fans with an affection for insects. Also, *Horrorplex* will be packed with its usual array of exclusive interviews, informative notices, entertaining profiles and action-packed previews.

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